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FULL TEST

Nikon D750

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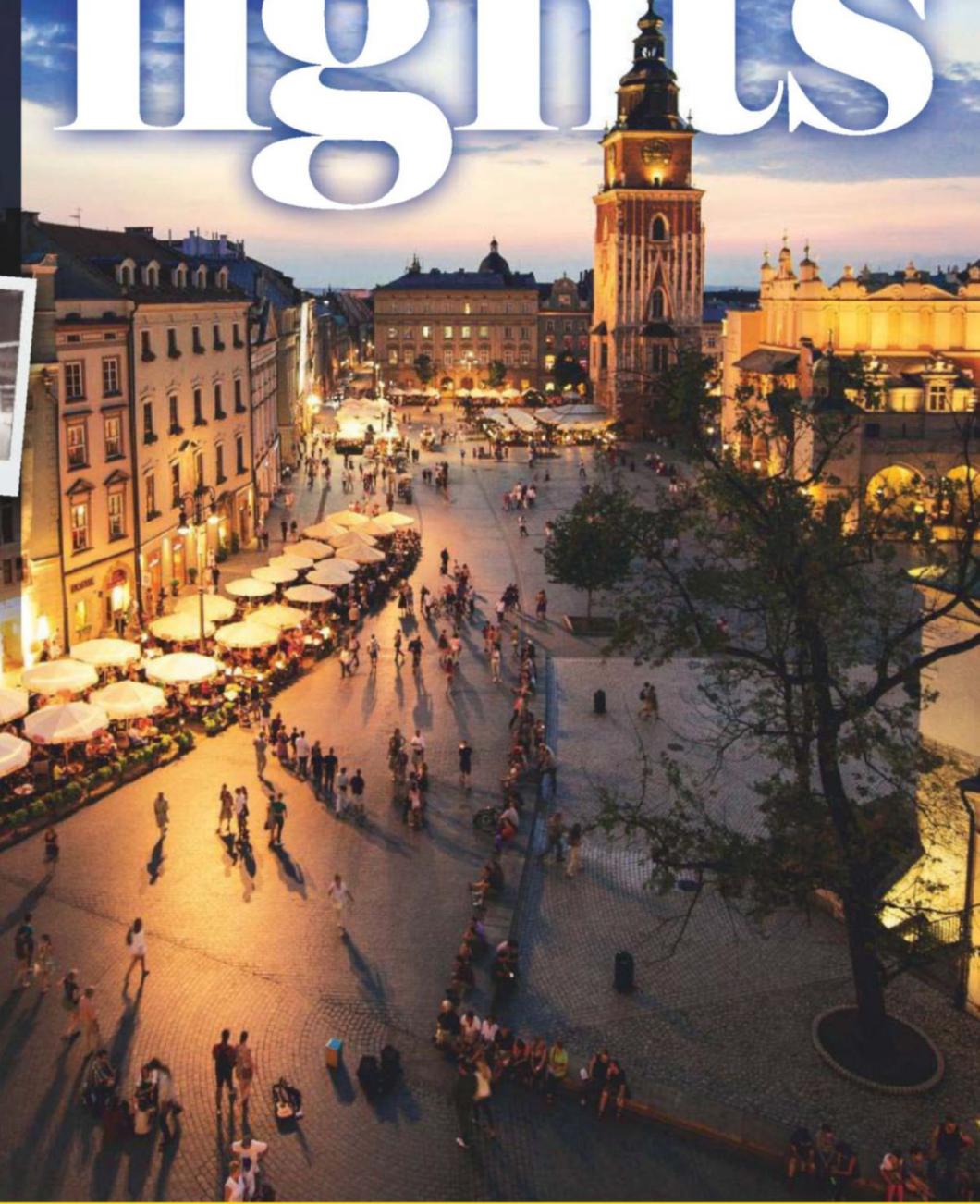
The amazing story of the rebirth of **Polaroid film**



DIY '**space**' photos
A reader's amazing images from the stratosphere

City lights

Expert tips for photographing cities after the sun goes down



PLUS APOY round 7 winners We reveal your best travel photos

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In this issue

10 Low-light cityscapes

Jeremy Walker on how to improve your technique

16 Up, up and away

Dave Akerman is hitting new heights by sending up cameras in balloons

23 In an instant

We report on the Impossible Project's successful reinvigoration of the Polaroid brand

28 Creative Photoshop

Ipoen Mahendra explains the secret behind his montage 'Memikul Berkah'

34 APOY round 7

We reveal the top 30 winners of our In a Faraway Place round

41 Evening class

Martin Evening sorts out your photo-editing and post-processing problems

43 Win a signed print

To celebrate our 130th birthday and raise money for the NSPCC, this is your chance to win a signed print from your favourite photographer

46 Nikon D750

Is the full-frame, 24.3-million-pixel D750 the perfect all-rounder?

55 Tips on Sony's Q

Sony's 2G lens-style QX1 has arrived, with the ability to use E-mount lenses

63 Win a Leica M

Collect your token for your chance to win a Leica M and 50mm lens

Regulars

3 7 days

19 Inbox

44 Accessories

59 Technical Support

90 Final Analysis



Photography has undergone many changes since Fox Talbot's day, but the shift from film to digital has arguably been the most sudden – and significant. All revolutions

have their winners and losers, and the list of companies that have fallen by the wayside is a long one. Some, like Kodak, were the architects of their own demise through mismanagement, while the withering of darkroom specialists like

Paterson and Durst seemed inevitable.

Polaroid, too, seemed destined to be trampled underfoot in the digital stampede. Formerly, its products were the only way that pro and amateur photographers could achieve instant gratification, or get prints without using a lab (hence its popularity for certain types of photo), but digital cameras made Polaroid's quirky film completely obsolete – which makes its revival all the more surprising. Find out all about The Impossible Project on pages 23–26. **Nigel Atherton, Editor**

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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK



Snail Reflection by Jackie Tighe

Olympus E-5, 50mm, 1/2500sec at f/2, ISO 200

This beautiful macro image, taken by Jackie Tighe, was uploaded to our AP Flickr page. You can see more of Jackie's work on her own Flickr page. Macro shots of insects is a recurring subject, and as you can see from this shot it's a technique she is now confident in tackling.

'I have been interested in macro photography for some time now,' says Jackie. 'When I'm planning a shoot I always look for the unusual or even set

up the shot to create the unusual. Although the snail is not one of the world's prettiest creatures, it is an absolutely fascinating subject for macro photography.'

'I took this shot late in the afternoon as the sun was getting lower in the sky, thus creating a nice light on the water. I held the stem with the snail on over the water to create a symmetrical effect, and took shots as the snail moved along. As with all my macro



Win!

Each week we will choose our favourite picture posted on the AP Facebook and Flickr communities and the AP forum. The winner will receive a year's digital subscription to AP worth £79.99.

work, the camera was handheld. Very little processing took place, just some minor tweaking to the contrast and saturation in Photoshop Elements.'

If you would like to be in with a chance of seeing your images within the pages of *Amateur Photographer*, then you can upload your shots to our Flickr site, Facebook page or the gallery found on our website. Everyone featured will receive a year's digital subscription to AP.

Send us your pictures

If you'd like to see your work published in *Amateur Photographer*, here's how to send us your images:

Email Email a selection of low-res images (up to 5MB of attachments in total) to appicturedesk@timeinc.com.

CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 20.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page or the gallery on our website. See details above.

Transparencies/prints Well-packaged prints or slides (without glass mounts) should be sent by Special Delivery, with a return SAE, to the address on page 20.

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Chris Cheesman



D750 Wi-Fi update

Nikon has updated advice on how to securely connect the D750 to a mobile device via Wi-Fi. The move came after AP identified a potential security concern, meaning someone could load D750 images to a device if the user had not first manually activated security settings via the wireless utility app. Visit support.nikonusa.com

Elements 13

Photoshop Elements 13 includes Photomerge Compose, designed to make copying elements of an image from one photo to another as easy as 'copy and paste'. Adobe has added three new Guided Edits, enabling users to add 'pops of colour', for example, to black & white photos. Adobe Photoshop Elements 13 costs £81.08, or £63.43 via an upgrade. For full details visit www.adobe.com



Aperture rings

Olympus micro four thirds cameras do not recognise aperture rings on recent Panasonic Leica lenses, but that could change. Olympus says there is strong demand for this to be added, so firmware updates may be on the way.



Cloud storage

Eyefi has launched a cloud image storage service designed to automatically sync photos across all devices, so they can be viewed anytime, anywhere. The Eyefi Mobi app is available through Apple iTunes and Google Play. The first three months are free, after which membership costs £34.99 per year. Users must also have an Eyefi card. A Mobi SD wireless memory card costs from £33.99 for an 8GB version. Visit www.eyefi.com



Ricoh G800

Ricoh claims its latest heavy-duty compact is more resistant to chemicals than previous models. The 16-million-pixel G800 is built to be used at depths of up to 5m and resistant to dust. Due out now, the G800 costs £599.99. Visit ricoh.com.



WEEKEND PROJECT

Panoramas

Whether you're photographing a sprawling countryside vista, or an impressive city skyscape, a panorama is the tool of choice when it comes to capturing an expansive setting.

A panorama is created by taking a series of photos, usually panning from left to right across a scene, and then digitally stitching the images together using editing software, such as Photoshop, or via a downloadable app. Thanks to the fact that a vast number of modern digital cameras now feature a built-in panorama shooting mode, panoramas have become increasingly



popular over the past few years, and it's easy to see why when you stop to take a look at some of the impressive results that can be created using the technique.



Shooting a panoramic image is a great way to create a striking vista



So, if you've never taken a panorama before, now is the time to get out there and do it. You'll soon discover just how much fun they can be to create.

1 When shooting your panorama, it's essential to ensure that each image is taken using the same exposure settings, otherwise when it comes to merging the shots together there will be a visible seam, ruining the illusion.

2 Keep an eye out for moving objects, such as cars and people. If they happen, move across your scene as you're taking the series of images – they may end up appearing twice in your shot, which may spoil the effect.

3 The next step is to upload them to your computer and merge them to create your panorama. This can be done quickly and easily using Photoshop's Photomerge option by heading up to File > Automate > Photomerge.

4 If you don't have your D-SLR to hand, you'll find that most modern smartphones feature a built-in panorama-shooting mode. This allows you to shoot and stitch together a panorama, all from your smartphone.

BIG picture

Stunning results from Marwell Wildlife's Photographer of the Year

This is the fifth year that Marwell have run their Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition and each year seems to be attracting stronger and stronger entries.

'Leopard Cub in the Light', taken by George Wheelhouse of Flitwick in Bedfordshire, beat off serious competition to become the overall winning photograph. The image of Marwell Zoo's leopard cub was taken by George during a day trip to the zoo with his family.

The overall winner's prize included a great nine-day Wild Espana trip supplied by the competition's sponsors Wildlife Worldwide worth £1,395.

To view photos from the other winners and find details of the competition, visit www.marwell.org.uk/winners2014

Words & numbers

Photography is not a sport. It has no rules. Everything must be dared and tried!

Bill Brandt

Photographer (1904-1983)

€20,000

The amount offered to photojournalists through the Tim Hetherington Grant. Entries close on 31 October. Visit www.worldpressphoto.org/tim-hetherington-grant

Army photographers honoured

HTHE ARMY has revealed the winners of its annual photographic competition which, for the first time, allowed the public to vote for the Best Overall Image via Facebook.

Corporal Jamie Peters, serving as a Combat Camera Team photographer in Afghanistan, won Best Overall Image with a photo called 'Fireball Flyers'.

The winning shot (right) depicts an Apache helicopter flying over a large explosion during an air show. It gained 1,671 'likes' on Facebook.

Commenting on the standard of this year's awards, Command Master Photographer WO1 Will Craig said: 'It gets better each year. The amateurs have also given us a high standard of photographs.'

'It's been impressive. Competition has been really fierce.'

Among this year's stars was Reservist Corporal Ian Chapman who won the Amateur Portrait category with a shot taken during an Army exercise on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire – captured using his Nikon D300.

Chapman – who first won Army photo honours in 2007 – said: 'The picture was taken during Airdrop Warrior.'

'I was cutting about with my camera, taking pictures of the guys on the exercise, and I snapped one of Jim just before he and some of the other guys breached a



This image, by Corporal Jamie Peters, came top in a public vote, run via the social networking site Facebook

minefield on the final attack. It was really exciting.'

Lance Corporal Dean Docwra, from Camberley, Surrey won both the Amateur Portfolio and Amateur Soldiering categories.

He said: 'My love of photography started when I was about 16. I used

to read magazines on photography and take photos on a little camera... As time has gone by, I've got into it more and more.'

Meanwhile, Sergeant Paul Morrison from Inverness triumphed in the Professional Portfolio section; and Sergeant Russ Nolan from

Hampshire claimed top spot in the Professional Portrait category.

Nolan, who has toured Afghanistan as part of the Combat Camera Team, said: 'I was originally a hobbyist photographer but slowly became gripped by it in 2004, and then it escalated from there.'



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D3S captures stunning space picture

HAN ASTRONAUT used a Nikon D3S DSLR to capture this incredible image of the Milky Way, before tweeting it live from space.

Reid Wiseman took the shot from the International Space Station where he was preparing for a spacewalk with fellow NASA astronaut Alexander Gerst.

'The Milky Way steals the show from Sahara sands that make the Earth glow orange,' Wiseman wrote on Twitter.

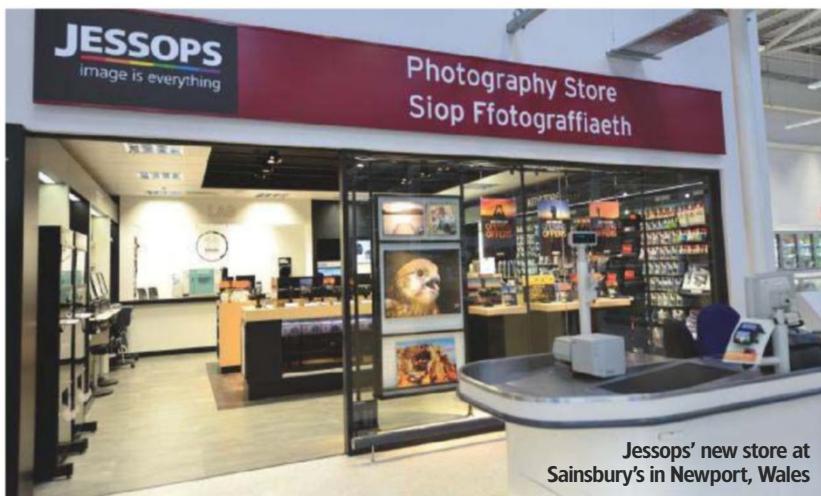
The astronaut took the stunning shot on 27 September, using a Nikon D3S and a 24mm f/1.4 lens, according to the image file's Exif data.

It was a manual exposure, using a three-second shutter speed and ISO of 12,800.

Wiseman's post has since been re-tweeted thousands of times.



Astronaut Reid Wiseman used a 24mm f/1.4 lens on a Nikon D3S DSLR



Jessops' new store at Sainsbury's in Newport, Wales

Jessops makes profit and opens new shops

JESSOPS has made an operating profit and opened the 'first of many' stores inside Sainsbury's supermarkets.

The chain which collapsed under former owners, closing all of its 187 shops last year, reported an operating profit of £280,000, on sales of more than £56m for the year to 30 April.

Jessops says the results are proof that the 'high street is well and thriving'.

Chairman Peter Jones

said: 'This is a great result and I'm excited that we've been able to restore an iconic British high-street brand.'

The news came as Jessops announced the opening of six new stores, to bring the total Jessops high-street outlets to 34.

Jessops is set to open stores in Reading, Milton Keynes, Canterbury, Hull and Kingston in November. The first, in Tunbridge Wells, is due to open this month.

These will be in addition to the new 'store in store' branches that Jessops has announced in a deal with Sainsbury's supermarket.

The first of these new shops has opened at Newport, South Wales.

The retailer says this will be followed by outlets in Waterloo, Hampshire, in December; and Maidenhead, Berkshire in January 2015.

Jones said Jessops' new stores will create over 100 jobs before Christmas.

Photographer denies Prince George spying

A PHOTOGRAPHER accused of harassing Prince George, and spying on his movements, insists he did not break any law and will continue to take pictures in a public place.

Niraj Tanna, a photographer at UK agency Ikon Pictures, told AP that a seven-page letter sent by his lawyer to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's legal team outlines all that he plans to say on the matter.

The furore centres on an incident that took place in London's Battersea Park on 23 September. Kensington Palace accuses Tanna of 'placing Prince George under surveillance and monitoring his



Kensington Palace says it issued a statement after an article in London's *Evening Standard*

daily routines for a period of time'.

Tanna's law firm, Lewis Silkin, claims suggestions the photographer was harassing the Prince are 'unsustainable'.

For more information on the case, visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Get up & go

The most interesting things to see, to do and to shoot this week. By Jon Stapley

LONDON



Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition

The WPOTY exhibition opens its doors for another year, this time celebrating its 50th Anniversary. It'll be touring the country soon, but here's your chance to be among the first to see these astounding images in person.

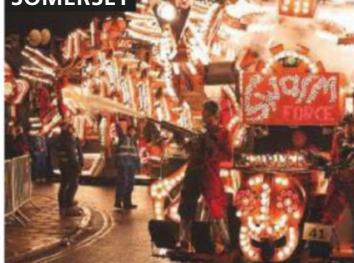
Opening 24 October www.nhm.ac.uk

Bridgwater Carnival

Guy Fawkes celebrations kick off in Bridgwater with a carnival that includes a spectacular procession. Also on the table is the unique act of 'squibbing' – the simultaneous firing of a huge number of fireworks.

1 November
www.bridgwatercarnival.org.uk

SOMERSET



LONDON



Imagining the East End

A wide range of photographers have contributed to Photomonth – 2014's flagship exhibition about London's East End – portrayed as a physical place and as something less tangible.

Until 2 November
2014.photomonth.org
www.eastendarchive.org

LEWES



Stories Seen Through a Glass Plate

A celebration of allegedly the oldest continuously operated photographic studio in the world, the Edward Reeves Studio in Lewes, which opened in 1855. Selections from the studio's 200,000-strong archive will be displayed along Lewes High Street. www.reevesarchive.co.uk

IGPOTY: final call

Your last chance to enter the eighth International Garden Photographer of the Year comp. With a £5,000 prize up for grabs it's well worth a punt for any green-fingered shooters.

Until 31 October
www.igpoty.com

EVERYWHERE





Viewpoint Dave Kai Piper

Pro shooter **Dave Kai Piper** is tired of the DSLR vs CSC debate – photographers should acknowledge that every camera has its place

Since Fox Talbot's days, we have been arguing about which cameras are best and judging our creative art by the technology used. Today, online forums are full of facts and statistics over which camera is sharper, faster, which is this and which is that. The talk of the town these days is seemingly the CSC v DSLR debate. Some people will tell you that DSLRs are dead, others say CSCs are not for serious photography.

I have a foot in both camps, using both a Nikon D800 and Fujifilm X-T1. In my opinion, neither one is better than the other; it's simply a matter of what you do with it. The problem today, as I see it, is that few photographers understand their own needs. You can use a spanner to hammer

'The problem today is that few photographers understand their needs'

in a nail and you can make coffee in a saucepan, if you want to. But would you? You can shoot fashion with an iPhone, and sports with a Phase One, but the fact is that different cameras come into their own with different types of subject or shooting style, and each has a place. Who cares if the sensor on one is 5mm bigger or smaller than the other? Does a ten per cent smaller sensor make you ten per cent less of a photographer? When I shoot half a wedding on the Fuji X-T1 and half on the D800, does that make half my photos only

half as good as the others? When a working photographer goes camera shopping, he has exact needs that have to be met by the camera, and chooses accordingly. The problem is that many hobbyists want a bit of this, and a bit of that. They want the power but in a compact body; the small size but a long battery life, the optics but not the weight. They want a camera that is all things to all men, because they don't know what they want to use it for and want to be prepared for all eventualities.

Buy according to your needs

We all have different needs, but if we can drill down to just what those are, the decision about camera suitability becomes much simpler. At the moment, I switch between the Nikon D800 and the Fuji X-series cameras on a daily basis. Both camera systems suit my needs and that of my clients. The D800 is mostly used in the studio and when I need the dynamic range of the sensor. The large detailed images they produce are so much easier to retouch. The Fuji CSCs make the perfect hybrid system that lets me have a lighter camera system for more candid, spontaneous shooting when I don't need the power and range of the Nikon.

For me, it is as simple as that.

Dave Kai Piper Dave is a photographer and retoucher who has worked with numerous brands and publications, as well as being an Adobe Community Professional. To view more of his images, visit www.ideasandimages.co.uk



Whether you prefer portraiture or landscapes, choose the camera that gives you the best results for each genre

© DAVE KAI PIPER

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 20 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

New Books

The latest and best books from the world of photography. By Oliver Atwell



© JEAN-MARIE GHISLAIN

Shark: Fear and Beauty

By Jean-Marie Ghislain, Thames & Hudson, £29.95, hardback, 192 pages, ISBN 978-0-500-517734



WHAT do you picture of when you think of sharks? Perhaps it's the great primordial force of nature that crashes through the ocean's surface to devour its prey. Or perhaps you think of the darkest depths of our planet's oceans and the fear that lurks within. What do you do when confronted with fear? You tackle it head-on, something photographer Jean-Marie Ghislain knows from experience. By confronting his own fear of sharks and occupying their territory, Ghislain has produced a series of images that confront our prejudices of these stunning creatures and forces us to view them in a very different light. Shot largely in black & white, his photographs exude a beauty and tranquillity that we perhaps haven't previously associated with sharks. Vastly misunderstood, this book goes a long way to dispelling some of the alarmist myths around these amazing predators.

★★★★★

In Almost Every Picture

By Erik Kessels, KesselsKramer, £25, soft cover, 180 pages, ISBN 978-90-70478-39-1



A FAMILIAR story: the family – all forced smiles and arms round each other's shoulders – line up in front of the camera. The photographer, most likely grandad, fumbles with the camera and has to check several times where the shutter button is. Minutes pass. The family becomes increasingly agitated. Smiles become grimaces. Finally grandad takes the photo. The family gather around to view the image. But what's that? A huge finger over the lens has blotted out the face of the father. Accusations of deliberate intent fly across the room. Christmas is once again ruined. This wonderful collection of images includes such portraits and landscapes ruined by the UFO finger of the incompetent photographer. Hilarious and beautifully produced. ★★★★★

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Low-light city



Jeremy Walker

Jeremy Walker is an award-winning professional photographer with many years' experience, specialising in high-quality landscape and location photography from around the world for use by advertising, design and corporate clients. A belief in 'quality is everything', a meticulous approach and a far-reaching vision and style serve Jeremy and his clients well. www.jeremywalker.co.uk

KIT LIST



Novoflex BasicBall tripod

The sturdiest mini tripod I have ever come across. Typical high-quality German engineering and such a simple design. The legs screw into what looks like half a metal tennis ball, with holes at different angles for limited adjustment.



Nikon 45mm PC-E lens

A tilt-shift lens for controlling perspective. Converging or diverging verticals can be corrected in Photoshop, but I prefer to get it right at the time of taking. I use a Nikon 45mm PC-E lens for a high proportion of my city work, but the 24mm tilt shift can also be very useful for architecture in tight corners.

scapes



A clean, crisp low-light image of City Hall, London

Jeremy Walker on the rules you need to follow to help improve your low-light cityscape technique

Shooting a city skyline is a piece of cake really, isn't it? Find your view, wait until sunset and then shoot, job done, pack up and go home. Isn't it that easy? Er, well no, not exactly. If you want clean, crisp city images there are a few rules to follow and simple techniques to take on board that will help to improve your city photography.

So exactly what do we mean by low light? To me low light is that time of day when light levels have dropped to a point where you have to start considering the use of a tripod without increasing the ISO rating. Although modern cameras have improved a great deal in terms of their low-light capabilities, thanks to some excellent high ISO performances, my preference as a professional is to have the highest image quality possible, and I prefer to keep the ISO as low as I can, hence the need for a tripod.

Timing

Two of the biggest mistakes I see when I am shown low-light images of city skylines, street scenes or even individual buildings, are skies that are pitch black with absolutely no detail or colour in them, and cloudy skies where the cloud has turned orange. The key with low-light photography is in the timing. Shoot an image too early and it will just be a normal daylight picture, shoot too late and you have black skies or orange clouds (the orange is because the street lights are bouncing



A low-light, but detailed, image of the Iwo Jima Memorial in Washington DC



ALL PICTURES © JEREMY WALKER

▼ Small torch

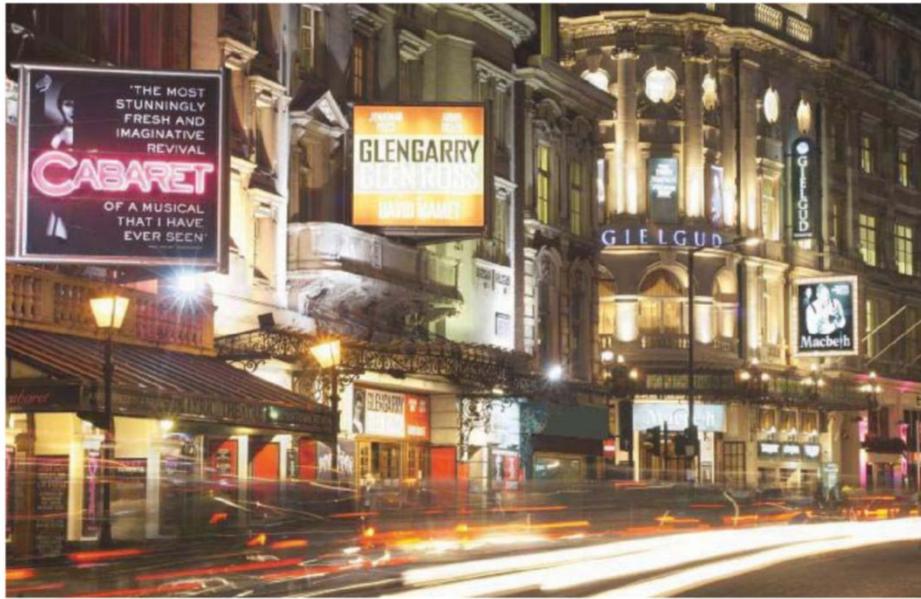
I'll guarantee that you will end up in some quiet backwater with limited street lighting to shoot the city skyline. A small torch is useful for peering into your camera bag or for finding that little something that you have just dropped – usually a set of keys. Look for ones with an LED bulb.



◀ Smartphone

With the right apps, you can find out sunset and sunrise times, look up maps and route finders to help you find where you need to be, use the stopwatch for timing long exposures and, oh yes, you even have a telephone in case of emergencies.

Timing is key to achieving the correct balance of artificial light and ambient daylight, as this atmospheric image of the Edinburgh skyline shows



Light trails

Another good technique for shooting cities in low light is to use long exposures to pick up movement in traffic and create light trails along street scenes. However, what may happen if you have buildings in the background is that the interior lighting will overexpose the windows and advertising signs will become blown out. A simple technique to avoid this is to shoot two frames from exactly the same position: one exposed for the exterior and one for the interior, and blend the two frames using a simple layer mask in Photoshop and ensure highlights through to shadow detail is correctly exposed.

off low cloud). The key is to time the taking of the image so that there is a balance between the ambient daylight and the artificial light coming from the buildings and streets.

The ideal timing of the shot depends on the prevailing weather conditions. Clear blue skies mean you can be shooting 30 minutes after sunset and sometimes much later. But if it is cloudy, the shooting window is considerably shorter, possibly just minutes in particularly extreme circumstances.

To meter for the correct exposure is relatively simple. Using matrix, or evaluative, metering mode on the camera, you meter for the skyline, allowing for some building and sky in the frame, set an aperture and then make adjustments using just the shutter speeds. The trick is to wait for the balance between the two to be visually correct – building lights on but detail or colour in the sky. Because the chip in the camera will record the light differently from how the human eye/brain sees it, you will probably still start shooting too early and the buildings will appear lifeless. Wait and shoot a frame once every few minutes, and you will slowly see the change in balance from a daylight-dominated image to one that is artificial-light source dominated.

This technique is, of course, for evening or dusk shooting. If you were shooting at dawn, the same rules apply about the balance between daylight and artificial light – but you have to be in position much earlier as the light

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*Pictured: "House of Savreda" by Werner Pawlik, from LUMAS.co.uk

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 levels will increase rather than decrease. In the end, the daylight will be too bright and office lights, street lights and any other artificial light sources will have been turned off.

Reflections

Of course, low-light cityscapes are not just about waiting for the office lights to come on or fountains to be floodlit. Trying to use daylight before the artificial lights have come on can be rewarding, too. An interesting concept is to shoot with your back to a setting (or rising) sun and use the reflected light in the skyline. With many modern office blocks dominated by huge sheets of glass, they can reflect a fiery sunset, showing up the shapes of the buildings in strong colours. Again, the technique is about timing and the balance of light. If you choose to shoot at dawn, you need to be in position very early as often the best colours come from a pre-dawn glow and can be at their optimum 30 to 45 minutes before sunrise if you have clear skies. The reverse will happen at sunset and, again, if you have clear skies the reflections can be at their peak 30 to 45 minutes after the actual sunset.

White Balance

Colour and the balance of artificial light to ambient daylight is crucial to low-light cityscapes, and one overriding consideration as to how your images look will be the white balance setting on the camera. As a starting point, 'auto' white balance will do a good job, but as it gets darker, try dropping the white balance to about 3800K, which will make a clear sky appear much more blue and will stop buildings and statues that are floodlit from going too orange. It's the equivalent of using tungsten-balanced film in daylight, which is what we did back in the days of film. Of course, if you take the white balance the other way and rate it at 8000K, for example, the image will go very warm indeed, so it is worth experimenting with a variety of white balance settings to achieve different effects.

AP

Using daylight before artificial lights come on can give you interesting results



Clear skies mean that your shooting window may be extended by up to 30 minutes



JEREMY'S TOP TIPS



Take a tripod

When shooting low-light images, exposures will be long and the camera must be rock steady. Sometimes tripods are banned in certain areas of a city, so a beanbag on a wall or a mini tripod, such as the incredibly sturdy Novoflex BasicBall, will do an excellent job. A cable, or remote, release for firing the camera is recommended.

BBC Weather London

Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
18°C / 14°C	20°C / 17°C	20°C / 17°C	21°C / 18°C	18°C / 15°C
Cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Cloudy

London and South East England

NewcastleGateshead

Check the weather forecast

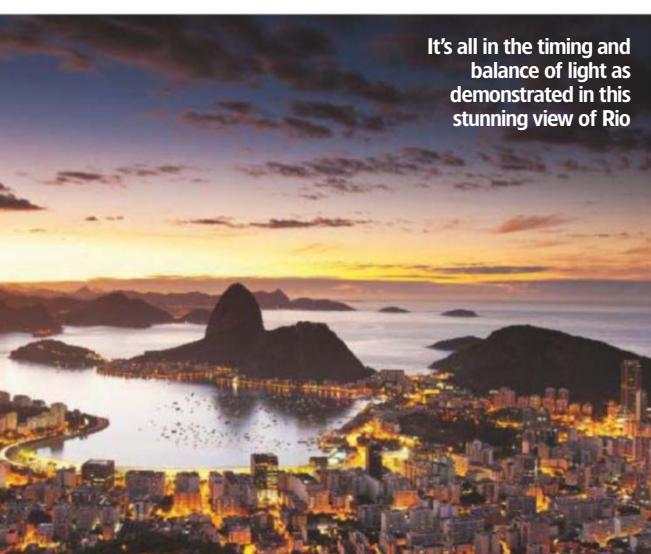
Don't be put off by talk of cloud or even rain. Clear skies for reflected light in skylines and skyscrapers is great, but clouds can reflect the light and be colourful, too. Rain on the streets adds a sense of mood and drama, while the wet surfaces can help bounce the light around. Cities can be shot and look dramatic in all weathers.

Scout the location

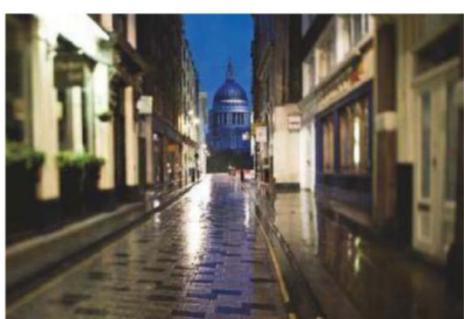
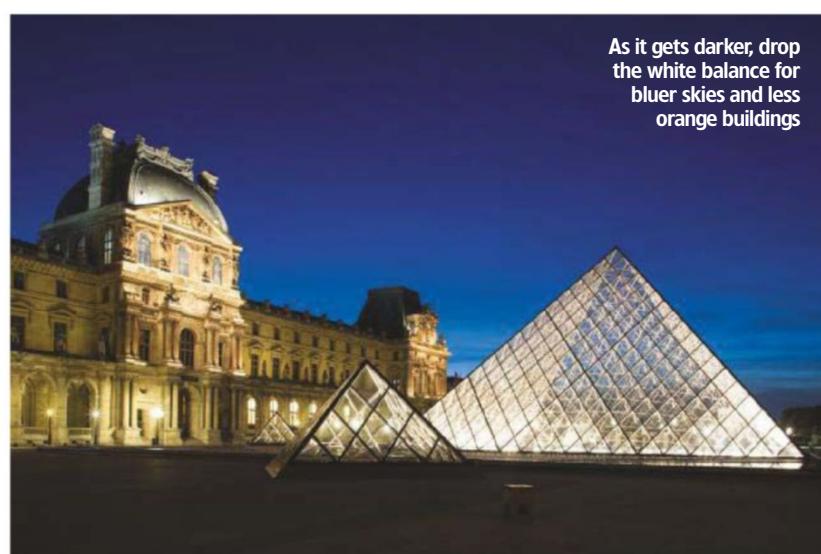
Have a good wander around in daylight and check the views and locality. If there is a river, can you get a view from the other side? Are there any high-rise blocks with possible elevated views? Hotels and restaurants are good for this. Research transport links and work out how far you have to walk to get in position.



It's all in the timing and balance of light as demonstrated in this stunning view of Rio



As it gets darker, drop the white balance for bluer skies and less orange buildings



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The fun doesn't end with the Edinburgh Festival, but it's a great start

A small thumbnail image showing a person in a costume or mask, possibly related to a festival or event.

What's on?

You may turn up to shoot a fantastic view but find it's the local half marathon, and the view is now covered in advertising hoardings or roads have been closed. I have turned up in both Rio and New York to find such events upsetting my plans. Marches and protests can also be a headache, so get on the computer and do the research.

Be safe

It sounds obvious, but often a city neighbourhood that looks ok in daylight can become a bit of a backwater wilderness in the dark. Chances are you will have a few pounds worth of kit with you, so take someone along for company and a spare pair of eyes. Having someone else watch your back can be a deterrent against bag snatchers.

Cityscapes can look dramatic in all weathers



Up, up and away

Keen amateur photographer **Dave Akerman** has hit new heights by sending up cameras in balloons. He talks to **Tom Smallwood**

It's not often that we feature a genuine record-breaker in the magazine, but Dave Akerman is the first photographer we've interviewed to send a webcam and Raspberry Pi computer up into the high reaches of the atmosphere – we're talking 39,994m, or nearly 40km.

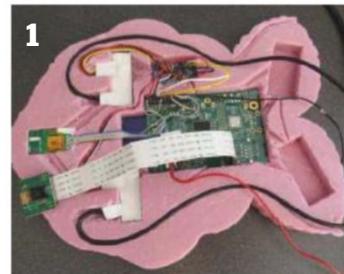
Dave captured some wonderful images with the webcam as it made its epic ascent into near space, and, although the balloon burst, he was able to retrieve both computer and camera intact.

Dave is a devotee of high-altitude ballooning, where enthusiasts use standard weather balloons with small 'payloads', usually carrying a tracking device for later retrieval, some sensors and a

video or stills camera that copies images on to a standard SD card. So how did Dave get involved in this fascinating but unpredictable genre?

'I'd always been interested in space and photography, going back to the days of the Apollo moon landings,' he explains. 'When I saw a video of a guy sending a balloon into the high altitude, I was hooked. Although I am also a keen travel and landscape photographer, I'm not so interested in conventional astrophotography. I live in a town, so light pollution is an issue.'

Dave has sent several cameras up into near space, principally the Canon PowerShot A495. 'The Canon A495 is light, which is an obvious bonus, and runs off AA batteries, which still



work at low temperatures.' Then, in 2012, he got his first Raspberry Pi computer, and came up with the idea of sending one up connected to a webcam (see box opposite).

Head in the clouds

Dave works as an electronics engineer and software programmer, so it wasn't too difficult to make a few tweaks to the Raspberry Pi to enable it to cope with the surprisingly high temperatures inside the payload. The actual webcam was a standard Logitech device.

'I tried a few webcams and settled on the Logitech C270, which is reasonable quality, light and cheap – handy in case the payload goes missing. I found the webcam software to be the best, as it worked without too much fiddling,' he says.

Dave believes there isn't much point sending up a higher resolution capture device. 'There is limited bandwidth available from the radio system for sending the pictures back down – it's like an old dial-up modem and can take three to five minutes per picture. Also, a





'I tried a few webcams and settled on the Logitech C270, which is reasonable quality, light and cheap'

typical flight lasts only two hours, so you don't have time to send very large images. I settled on 432 x 240 pixels with 50% compression, as this is a good compromise between quality and download speed. For this kind of photography you don't actually need lots of pixels, anyway. Because the clouds are fluffy there isn't much to focus on, but I will boost the contrast

during post-processing.'

Dave's subsequent images are even more remarkable as he had minimal control over where the webcam was pointing. It's not possible to control the camera's direction much, as the payload under the balloon will swing and point it in every direction. Rather than worrying about aiming it, I compared the photos during the live feed and



Pi in the sky

DAVE is the first to admit that the stripped-back Raspberry Pi computer, introduced to promote the teaching of computer science in schools, is not the obvious choice to send up in a balloon.

'In most of my previous flights I used Arduino Mini Pro boards, which are ideal – they're simple, tiny, weigh almost nothing and need very little power. I looked at the Pi and saw none of these desirable features. What I did see, however, was a USB port offering easy and cheap access to a webcam. This meant that, for the first time, I could get live images from near space, something that hasn't been done very often.'

chose the best ones. If the camera was pointing at the sun or a black sky, the images would obviously be worthless. You can see the sky getting darker and darker as the balloon increases in altitude, and by the time you get to 70km, it's black.'

Dave also feels that less is more when it comes to avoiding problems with condensation on the lens. 'It's not normally a problem. Ironically, it can be more of a headache if you use something like a GoPro case, which seems to lock in the moisture.'

Staying grounded

As mentioned, Dave is a keen travel and landscape photographer and owns a Canon EOS 400D. Has he ever thought about sending up an SLR? 'Not really. SLRs are heavy so I would need more gas for the balloon. I'd also worry about getting it back in one piece!'

1 Dave's trusty Raspberry Pi computer, made by the Pi Foundation

2 Flying high – the balloon rises up through the atmosphere with its cargo

3 Here, the webcam managed to get a view of another flight that launched at the same time as Dave's. It's an increasingly popular hobby

4 It's quite hard to control the direction of the camera for careful composition. Rather, the camera swings and rotates during flight

5 Even though it's hard to control the direction of the camera some great shots can be had. This shows light from the sun reflecting off the top layer of clouds

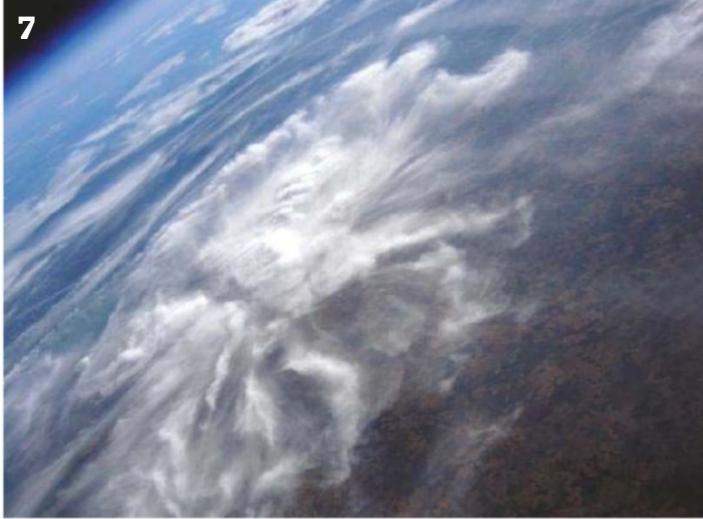
6 A spectacular image showing the land mass of Devon and Cornwall, taken from the balloon while it was over Swindon

7 Everything came together for this shot too, which shows interesting cloud photographed above Norfolk

Indeed, getting everything back safely can be one of the biggest headaches with high-altitude balloon photography. 'Since mobile-phone coverage is not 100% consistent across the UK, you need to be able to add a radio transmitter to the circuit board. Then you just have to go out and retrieve everything. It helps that I have worked on industrial control systems, GPS technology and telemetry systems for Formula One cars.'

So what's next? Does Dave ever fancy being the next Felix Baumgartner and going up himself? 'I'm working on plans to send up a higher resolution webcam, again connected to a Raspberry Pi. I have no desire to go up there. Somebody contacted me recently to ask if I would help him go into near space, but he hadn't factored-in the cost of all the special suits and other safety equipment. I had to politely decline.'

AP



Dave Akerman trained as an electronics engineer and software programmer and became fascinated by space when he watched the Apollo moon landings on TV as a child. He has worked on industrial control systems, GPS and telemetry for racing cars and now works as a self-employed programmer. He currently lives in Ross-on-Wye and is also a keen travel and landscape photographer. www.daveakerman.com



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LETTER OF THE WEEK

A Faustian pact?

OK, look, seriously, I give up. I have wracked the limited cerebral resources available to me and I just can't figure it out. How on earth do the boffins at Fuji manage to squeeze so much image quality from a sensor measuring just 8.8 x 6.6mm (the 2/3in sensor found in the X20 and X-Q1)? I understand that the AA filter has been removed and this will help but seriously, people, what's going on here? My suspicion is that deep in the bowels of the factory is a grey-haired technician who at some point during the heady, carefree days of his youth, decided to walk to the nearest crossroads at midnight and enter into some arrangement with a character of dubious



Win!

With ultra-fast performance, the new Samsung 16GB EVO SD card, Class 10, Grade 1, offers up to 48MB/sec transfer speed and has a ten-year warranty. www.samsung.com

SAMSUNG

Film fans

I would like to congratulate you on your 100 Years of Leica article (AP, 19 July). Over the last few years, AP has steadily and relentlessly reduced its reference to film photography, to (in my opinion) the detriment of the magazine. You will be aware that regardless of the popularity of digital there are many photographers who remain dedicated to the use and technique of film. Please, please, can we have more film input in the magazine?

The seemingly never-ending reviews of digital equipment that becomes rapidly obsolete does not inspire this particular reader. Let us look forward to reading the magazine with a more balanced content.

**David Charlwood,
New Zealand**

AP is passionate about photography – however it is created – but over 90% of our readers now shoot digitally so this will obviously be reflected in the magazine

– in the pictures that get submitted, the photographers we interview and the technique articles we publish. Our reviews section also inevitably reflects the fact that virtually all new cameras made today are digital. We will of course review the only new 35mm camera launched at Photokina, the Leica M-A, when it becomes available

– Nigel Atherton, Editor

Photokina

I was disappointed to see your Photokina article (AP, 4 October) gave so little attention to the event – limited to a single column in the News. There was no comment about new trends. The lack of any exciting new models from Nikon or Canon (with the exception of the Canon PowerShot G7 X) left the field open for the likes of Fuji, Sony, Panasonic and Samsung to excite the visiting public and commentators. Significantly, these have all embraced the move to mirror-less

technology. As a long-time Canon user I have become disappointed by their recent lack of innovation. I remember when they introduced the A1 that brought the option of PASM control to 35mm film cameras, at a time when manual or aperture priority were the likely options on most other cameras. It was also Canon that took the bold step to introduce the completely new range of electronically controlled EF lenses, replacing the FD mechanically controlled ones and risking the ire of existing users. As you are 'Amateur Photographer', I would hope that your magazine reflects the interest of readers like myself and provide commentary on this significant trend. **Peter Flower, Surrey**

Peter, hopefully you'll have found our 12-page Photokina report in last week's issue. The printer's deadline for the 4 October issue was too soon to have covered it all in there

– Nigel Atherton, Editor



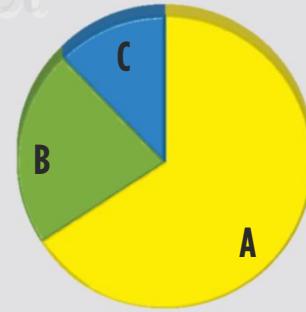
What gives the X20 such great image quality?

intent, to say the least. It's the *only* explanation... isn't it?

David Richards, Dorset

Quite a lot of the amazing technology we take for granted these days seems like it came out of a Harry Potter novel!

– Nigel Atherton, Editor



In AP 4 October, we asked...

Would you be interested in a medium-format digital camera if it was affordable?

You answered...

A Yes, If they were cheaper I would be interested in a medium-format digital camera	66%
B No, I have no need for a medium-format digital camera	22%
C I don't know, I've never really considered a medium-format digital camera	12%

What you said

'Even if they were the same price as full frame, you would need new, very expensive lenses'

'To be honest, no. I have a 6x6 film camera and although it was fun to use I usually took my 35mm SLR if I was doing any serious shooting'

'If someone produced a light MF folder I might be tempted'

'I would love to have a MF DSLR; the problem is the weight of them for me'

Join the debate on the AP forum

This week we ask

Do you think there's a place for instant film in the age of digital?

Vote online www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Guess the date



Win! Every week we post an old AP cover on our Facebook page and all you have to do is guess the issue date (day/month/year). The person who is closest to the exact date wins a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99. To guess the date of this cover (above), head over to www.facebook.com/Amateur.photographer.magazine. Forum members can also enter via the Forum.



The 4 October issue's cover was from 22 November 1980. The winner is Leo Daly via our Facebook page, who was closest with a guess of 1 December 1980.

Strapping time

Having been a keen enthusiast of 30 years or so, I am always looking for something to do which can save a few pennies in these lean times. Camera straps came to mind and their cost, which can be very expensive, so I have come up with a very cheap alternative. Take an old camera bag strap – the hook and eye kind – a butchered old manufacturer camera neck strap, some fettling and a tripod bracket one with a loop. Manfrotto makes one for the 055 (pictured). I cut up the old neck strap and used an old spring clip from a discarded rucksack as a fail-safe. With a little ingenuity and a disposable lighter to melt and stop the ends fraying I built my own strap. Cost? Zero. Time taken? 30 minutes. Give it a try – you might save yourself some cash!

Adam Law, South Lanarks

Canvas query

Martin Evening gave a short lesson on Extending the Canvas Area (AP 27 October). There is one aspect that I have not made work. It is the selection of part of the image not to be expanded and saved as a channel. Is it possible for this to be explained in finer detail please?

Frank Adams, via email



Save yourself some cash and make your own camera strap

As you will appreciate, it is not possible to go into too much detail with these steps. You need to add a channel to the Channels panel, and with the channel selected in the Channels panel and the eyeball selected next to the composite channel, paint on the image to define the part of the image you wish to protect or hide.
Black on the mask hides and white on the mask reveals
– Martin Evening

Classic celebration

I applaud your Classics Revisited series. You can still do better, though. You show us how to copy a classic image. How much better if we could also understand the thinking that went into the original. Add to the 'how' the 'what' and 'why', something akin to Roger

Hicks' thoughtful Final Analysis column. Then we would have a better chance of producing our own classics.

Stefan Shillington, via email

Keep it local

I read with interest the Viewpoint article (AP, 4 October) by James Madelin. May I say that in Northampton, we are very fortunate to have Skears Photographic on the Wellingborough Road where the helpful staff are led by proprietor Steve Skears. The business carries a wide range of stock and deals in part exchanges with very fair prices.

Tony Johns, via email

It's always great to hear about successful local businesses offering good, personal service, Tony
– Nigel Atherton, Editor

In next week's issue

On sale Tuesday 28 October

Urban portraits

Damien Lovegrove shares his tips on shooting great posed urban portraits



© DAMIEN LOVEGROVE

'I make money from my smartphone'

We talk to photographers who have ditched their DSLRs for smartphones, and still sell their images

Canon PowerShot G7 X

Our full test of this 1in-sensor compact – one of the most appealing new cameras from Photokina

Shooting film pt 2

Andrew Sanderson continues his series on shooting, processing and printing black & white

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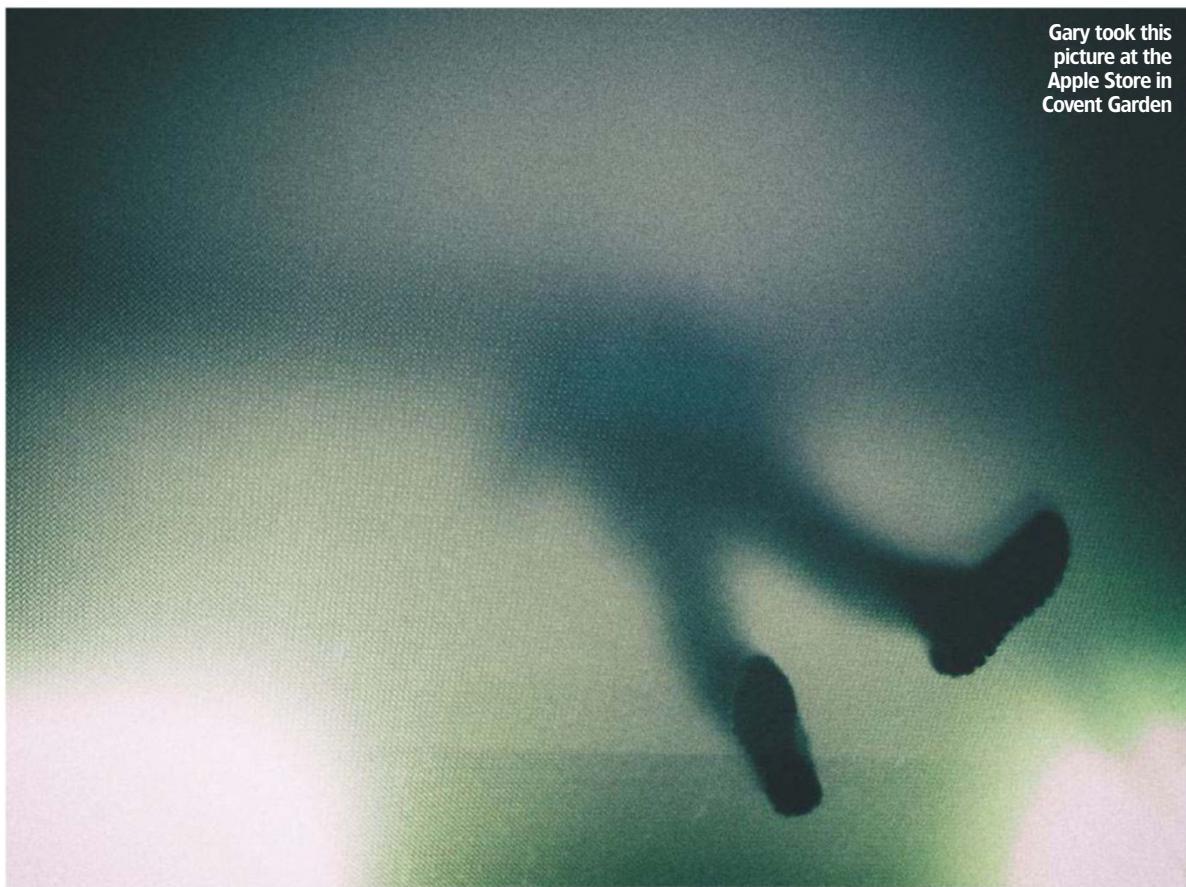
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Gary took this picture at the Apple Store in Covent Garden



Factfile

Gary, from London, has been a keen photographer since his teens. An early digital adopter, he recently reacquainted himself with film when he bought a used Leica M6 to complement his Canon EOS 5D Mark II.

A week with a Leica M

Gary Perlmutter was one of three readers who won a week's loan of a highly desirable **Leica M** in our exclusive competition. He tells us how he got on

IN OUR 30 August issue, we offered three readers the chance to borrow a Leica M for a week, along with an exclusive workshop at the Leica Akademie in London's Mayfair. This week, we feature Gary Perlmutter and a selection of his images illustrating the theme of 'street photography'. Here he shares his first impressions of the camera.

'The M was heavier than I had expected, like it was honed from a solid block of metal,' recalls Gary. 'It's built like a tank! It's very compact, though, much smaller than my full-frame DSLR, which is amazing considering that it also houses a full-frame sensor. The build quality really is superb – every dial rotates securely and positively, and the focus ring is so smooth and precise. The focus tab is perfectly positioned to help balance the camera in my hand.'

'People failed to notice the camera, even when I was standing just a few feet away from them'

'I love the fact that you can see at a glance the shutter speed and f-stop you have selected, which I find so much easier than delving into menus on an LCD screen that can be difficult to read in bright sunlight. There is even a dedicated button to change the ISO setting. For street photography, which is my passion, it was great not having the viewfinder blank out while a mirror swings out of the way, potentially missing that "decisive moment".'

'Because it's small and unobtrusive, I found that while I was out on the street, people failed to notice the camera, even when I was standing just a few feet away from them with the camera raised to my eye. When I got back home and uploaded the images, I was really impressed with the quality and sharpness that the sensor and Leica lens produced. The images were stunning.'



Gary calls this shot '8086' and he took it in London's Regent Street. 'I liked how everyone is oblivious to their outfits and his painted face'

Verdict

'The Leica M system has come a long way since the M3 60 years ago, but the latest M keeps the same classic look, yet incorporates a full-frame sensor and still uses the same original M mount. Having used it for a week, I must confess that if I could afford it, I would buy one in a heartbeat.'

Don't forget to collect your token on page 63 to win a Leica M!



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In an instant

Impossible Project chiefs **Creed O'Hanlon** and **Stephen Herchen** discuss reinvigorating the iconic Polaroid brand with **Andrew James**, while **Oliver Atwell** takes a look at Polaroid's enduring legacy

In a world dominated by digital imaging, the death of the iconic Polaroid company was perhaps an inevitability. Instant film couldn't compete with the immediacy of digital and, in 2008, Polaroid finally ended production. The future for instant analogue film – once a fixture in every professional studio – looked grim.

While there was enough stockpiled to keep enthusiasts supplied for a while, without a new source of film it appeared instant analogue products were to be consigned to the history books. But even as Polaroid shut its doors, two visionaries were cooking up plans to keep the format alive.

Florian 'Doc' Kaps and André Bosman raised enough investment to purchase the final factory making instant film and set about creating a

company that would, against all odds, keep the process alive. It was a huge gamble, a fact reflected in the name of their company – The Impossible Project (also influenced by Polaroid mastermind Edwin H Land's quote: 'Don't do anything that someone else can do. Don't undertake a project unless it is manifestly important and nearly impossible').

This month, The Impossible Project celebrates its sixth birthday and, while current Chief Executive Officer Creed O'Hanlon and Chief Operating and Technical Officer Stephen Herchen aren't declaring The Impossible Project is yet complete, they are agreed it has survived some difficult times and the future is now looking more positive than ever.

Undoubtedly, The Impossible Project has experienced a roller-

Above: Test shots of London's iconic Shard (left) and Impossible's HQ in Berlin, Germany

Above right: Head honchos Creed (left) and Herchen



coaster ride since its launch. While the passion and dedication of the founders and the team they recruited ensured that new, instant films were launched and many classic Polaroid cameras were refurbished, it has not been an easy existence. Despite raising \$559,000 in a successful Kickstarter campaign, the business was still lacking serious investment and a structure to really move it forward. It was against this backdrop that O'Hanlon, whose background was in both analogue and digital media, entered the fray.

'At the beginning of 2013, the company was undergoing some changes and Doc (Kaps) was looking at restructuring the senior management,' explains Creed. 'He invited me to Berlin to look at the e-commerce strategy but, on

THE HISTORY OF POLAROID

1926 Harvard drop-out Edwin H Land pursues work on light polarisation. Two years later, he files the patent for the first synthetic polariser.

1937 The Polaroid Corporation is formed. The company makes glasses, ski goggles, stereoscopic motion picture viewers and many other products.

1943 Land conceives the one-step photographic system when his daughter asks why she can't see the picture he has just taken of her.

1947 Land reveals the one-step process at the Optical Society of America. In 1948, the Model 95 Land camera is launched. Sales exceed \$5 million in one year.

1961 Polaroid Positive/Negative 4x5in film Type 55 is introduced – the first black & white film producing a positive and a negative. Two years later, Polaroid introduces Type 38 and 48, its first instant colour films. The Model 100 Land camera is launched.

1965 Polaroid debuts the \$20 Swinger, a plastic-cased camera that takes only black & white wallet-sized photographs.

1971 The Big Shot Land camera debuts, designed to take flash colour portraits. Andy Warhol becomes its best-known user.

1972 The Polaroid SX-70 Land camera arrives. The first fully automatic, motorised, folding SLR ejecting self-developing colour prints.



Countless test shots are produced in order to further product development and quality



Jos is one of the few remaining experts who can recondition old Polaroid cameras



'It was a big, sprawling company and it badly needed rationalising'

my way home to south-west France, I was called and asked to take over as CEO. My wife said 'no' because we were enjoying a pleasant semi-retired life then, but I said yes!'

Creed saw the potential of the project, but was immediately struck by some of the problems it faced. So he centralised the business's front end functions in Berlin, shut some overseas offices, scaled down others and took a cold, hard look at the quality of the film it was producing.

'I had to bring some business expertise to proceedings. It was a big sprawling company and it needed rationalising,' Creed adds. 'In 2012, only 10% of the customers buying our film were re-buying them. Clearly, we had some issues and I even stopped production for six weeks because of it,' he admits.

Mining history

Central to Creed's vision for the company was tapping into the knowledge of Polaroid's past. This is what led him to Stephen Herchen. Having worked for Polaroid for 28 years, Stephen provided the direct link between The Impossible Project

and the original Polaroid processes.

'Stephen came to give us some advice but fell in love with the format all over again,' Creed reveals. 'His direct involvement was a huge turning point for us, and evidence of his influence on the company is the quality of film we are producing now. The next release will be even better, and certainly the point when we start to equal the products created by Polaroid itself.'

Stephen's eye as the chief technical officer is clearly fixed on further product improvement. 'I think what I've been able to do is still taking shape. It's not come to fruition yet. We are looking at the chemistry of the product – seeing what we are doing well and what the shortcomings are,' he says.

The creation of a computer model that enables them to simulate the components before they are actually worked on is a huge step forward.

'It allows us to see exactly what we can do to make the biggest improvements and then focus our time into developing the right areas,' reveals Stephen.

The actual process of creating

instant analogue film is incredibly complex, and Stephen makes it very clear that he believes it is the world's most chemically complex man-made product.

He acknowledges that there has been a dramatic improvement in the quality of the company's film from a year ago, but is quick to put the credit for this on the team that was working on it before his knowledge was added to the mix. But in terms of where future improvements lie, he is very clear in his predictions.

'We will see colour instant film improved in terms of its 'instantness' and quality. We are hoping that the first half of next year will see a big step change. Then, as we get to the end of the year, I think we will be able to move it forward yet again.'

The speed at which an image is developed is a key part of the process, and Stephen predicts that a colour film that currently takes eight to ten minutes to reveal an image and 40 minutes to finish its development will be cut to two minutes and 30 minutes initially, before being pushed down to as little as ten minutes for a developed print.



Jos Ridderhof renovating and repairing a Polaroid SX-70 camera

Fresh eyes

Both Creed and Stephen agree that their consumer base is changing as rapidly as they are attempting to develop the products. While they know they have a die-hard group of analogue lovers who have never stopped using instant film, or at least returned to it as soon as it was readily available again, they recognise an emerging group of younger users.

'These people have a genuine desire for the physicality of our products,' explains Creed. 'Our Instant Lab means that you can produce a print in that iconic square format from your phone. Teenagers are experiencing that magic of watching a film emerge. That complex chemical reaction that results in something tangible is driving this fascination.'

Stephen admits that his dedication to the task at hand is driven through passion. 'I love what The Impossible Project is trying to do here and, as I've already dedicated 28 years of my

life to this process, it has become part of my DNA,' he explains. 'When Polaroid was winding down it was a difficult time, but this is keeping it alive for older and younger users.'

Having met so many photographers of all ages who are passionate about the process, he describes what he does as an 'incredible joy'.

With improving film products and even a new camera on the horizon, the management team at The Impossible Project has reason to be optimistic about the future of its analogue products.

'Making instant analogue film is a hand-made process,' Creed sums up. 'It is more akin to making fine wine, and so there will always be an element of project about what we do. But we are working hard to create the right professional structure.'

'It was never a career move for me; I was simply fascinated by what had been achieved and then interested in how I could help turn it into a profitable, long-term venture.'



The SX-70

The National Media Museum's Colin Harding looks back at Polaroid's iconic SX-70 camera

OF ALL the cameras produced by Polaroid it will always be the SX-70 produced in 1972 that will forever be synonymous with instant images.

The first generation of Polaroid cameras produced monochrome images and operated using the peel-apart system. After exposure, the photographer would pull the exposed film out of the camera and the action would burst the pod of chemicals, which would spread across the image.

In 1972, Polaroid introduced the first folding camera: the SX-70, and developed the first integral pack containing the film, chemicals and battery. After exposure, the camera automatically ejected the image, the action of which spread the chemicals across the image and initiated development. Within a year, Polaroid was producing 5,000 SX-70 models a day. Perhaps the introduction of this camera is largely responsible for the fact that, in 1974, it was estimated that around a billion Polaroids had been taken.

1976 Sales of Polaroid cameras exceed six million units. A year later, the OneStep Land camera, an inexpensive fixed-focus becomes the best-selling camera in the US.

1980 Edwin Land retires as CEO. Three years later, the company has 13,402 employees, \$1.3 billion in sales and over 1,000 patents.

1985 Polaroid's legal victory in a long-running dispute forces Kodak out of the instant-camera business.

1991 Polaroid founder Edwin H Land dies on March 1. In 1992, the ultra-compact Captiva camera and film system (portraits) is launched.

1998 Polaroid corners the instant-image market again by becoming number one digital camera seller in the US.

2001 Over seven years, Polaroid faces financial challenges making the transition from analogue to digital. The company files for bankruptcy and stops instant-film production.

2008 The founders of The Impossible Project purchase the last factory in the world manufacturing Polaroid instant film.

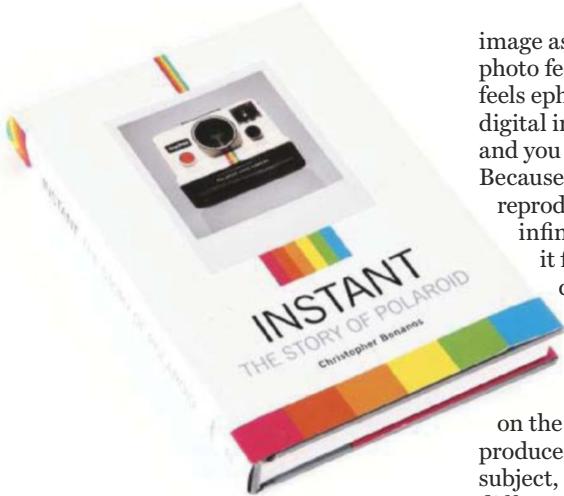
2009 The Polaroid brand is purchased by PLR IP Holdings, LLC, and produces the PoGo Instant Digital Camera and more.

2010 The Project begins production of its own reformulated versions of classic Polaroid instant film for vintage cameras.



For more information visit www.the-impossible-project.com

New York Magazine senior editor **Christopher Bonanos** is the author of **Instant: The Story of Polaroid**. He offers some thoughts on why Polaroid remains such a popular brand. Here, he talks to **Oliver Atwell**



What makes Polaroid so popular? Why are people still so fascinated?

Well, I think it's two things. The first is that Polaroid did something that no one else had done – despite Kodak's attempts. Nobody else sold a photo that developed in your hand. The fact is, everybody knows what a Polaroid picture is, even now as we approach ten years since Polaroid's decline, and even decades since Polaroid was at the centre of American photography. Polaroid did something that was incredibly technically complex and made it a part of American life and beyond.

But I think it goes deeper. The mystique now is different. The photograph went through a major transformation when photography moved into the digital age. A photograph used to be a physical object; you didn't have it unless you had a negative or a print in your hand. Then it was yours. Now you have a stream of data. You keep an image on your computer or tablet. On my phone I have about a thousand photos. That's a striking contrast when you consider the

image as a physical object. A physical photo feels precious and a digital file feels ephemeral. You can have a digital image in a bunch of places and you can always get it back. Because a digital photo can be reproduced and transmitted infinitely and in a very short time it feels – and I'm hesitant to say disposable – maybe less fragile and less precious. A digital file certainly feels less one-of-a-kind.

Because a Polaroid is made on the spot, and since it was produced in the room with its subject, it can feel special in a whole different way. If you take a photo of the President and then you hand it to him and then take it away and put it in your pocket it was there. He actually held it. If you keep the image then it becomes an artifact of the moment in which it was made.

Polaroid did something that was incredibly technically complex and made it a part of life'

What about the imperfections of things such as focus and the development? Does that contribute to the uniqueness?

A lot of people discuss the imperfections of Polaroid, but some Polaroid users get very agitated about this. The reason is that if you put Polaroid film in a good camera with a good lens, then it will produce a really sharp, high quality picture. It's actually rather fine film. However, many Polaroid cameras are inexpensive ones with plastic lenses. They're cheap box cameras that were produced by the hundreds of millions. Their pictures are only okay and in the hands of photo amateurs



New York Magazine
senior editor
Christopher
Bonanos with a
Polaroid SX-70

they can sometimes be less than okay. Hence the idea that Polaroid photography is a low quality amateur medium. It really doesn't have to be.

However, I agree that given this is most peoples' perception – especially young people who encountered Polaroid late in its history and didn't see the kinds of pictures Ansel Adams was making – they are entranced by the imperfection of what they see as an inherent quality of Polaroid. That again is a response to digital quality and 'perfection'. Then the Polaroid becomes a one-of-a-kind object with flaws.

I've read previously that you feel that in many ways Instagram is the continuation of what Polaroid was doing. Can you expand on that?

Instagram is an heir to much of what Polaroid did. If you look at Instagram's logo it has little rainbow stripes taken from the Polaroid brand. They're deliberately aware of the legacy they are continuing.

The fundamental quality of Polaroid photography is that you can see the picture on the spot. One of the most basic things you did with a Polaroid is to share it. You take a picture of a friend and you give it to that friend. It's a slightly different kind of sharing because it's one-to-one instead of one-to-the-world.

Polaroid-founder Edwin Land wrote at some length about the experience of instant photography and how it drew people together on the spot. If you go to a public place and show someone your camera, take pictures of each other and share them, it creates a bond. You share pictures with new friends. Many of my new friends were made this way.

So sharing images has become a part of Polaroid's enduring legacy and Instagram takes that to the entire world.



Instagram's logo
pays homage to the
Polaroid rainbow

You can learn more of Christopher's thoughts on Polaroid by visiting his website www.polaroidland.net

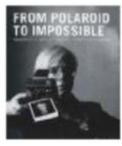
FURTHER READING



Instant Light Tarkovsky Polaroids

£16.95, Thames & Hudson, 2006

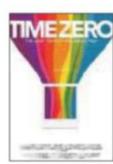
Russian film-maker Andrey Tarkovsky was an artist capable of capturing transcendent beauty within his films. His Polaroid shots were equally masterful and are a clear demonstration of what can be achieved with instant images.



From Polaroid to Impossible: Masterpieces of Instant Photography the Westlicht Collection

£35, Hatje Cantz, 2011

Published three years after the birth of The Impossible Project, this volume acts as a nostalgic look back at what Polaroid was and hints at what it can be again. This is a real must for any Polaroid aficionado.



Time Zero: The Last Year of Polaroid Film

93 mins, 2012

This documentary, made by Grant Hamilton in the final year of Polaroid's production, interviews a number of photographers and former employees of Polaroid and asks them one simple question: what does Polaroid mean to you?

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KEY IMAGES

TO CREATE the final composite image, Ipoenk brought together a total of seven images he'd taken. Using elements from each shot, these were then cut out and merged together in Photoshop to produce the final image.



Ipoenk Mahendra

Ipoenk Mahendra is a professional photographer based in a village in Cirebon, Indonesia. Since the advent of digital, Ipoenk has created a series of highly stylised images of village life that has brought him a worldwide following.

www.500px.com/IpoenkGraphic



Memikul Berkah

By Ipoenk Mahendra

Ipoenk Mahendra tells how he made this montage

First off, I want to stress that I'm not a trained graphic designer. In fact, I worked as a professional wedding photographer and shot film for years before swapping to digital. It was the easy access to the internet in Indonesia that changed my way of working. Seeing the various genres of photography being created around the world, I soon grew bored with my commercial wedding



ALL PICTURES © PIENK MATERBA

photography. I wanted to shoot something completely different and began to take a greater interest in the day-to-day activities of the people in my hometown.

Inspiration

Unfortunately, the area where I live isn't conducive to the type of photos I wanted to capture. So I started to think about manipulating shots to give them more

drama and interest. I wanted the images to reflect the inspiring story of the frail, elderly people around my village, who still have fortitude despite the tough life they lead.

This gentleman undertakes strenuous daily tasks, but believes life is a blessing from God. I wanted to add elements to tell the story, as well as mist effects, vintage toning and lighting effects in order to render a unique atmosphere.

Top tip

COMPOSITION is the most important part of the image-making process for me, so regardless of how many elements I'm working with, I always aim to balance the image, fitting key parts following the rule of thirds. After that, I can turn my attention to building up the atmosphere and lighting in the image.

STEP BY STEP**1 Make a selection**

I'll make a selection of my main subjects using the Lasso tool with a Feather of just 1px. Another trick is to use Channels to select the colour range – I make a copy of the Blue channel and then go to Select > Color Range, allowing me to separate the darkest and lightest areas of the image to make selections of complex areas.

**2 Create background**

To create the foundations for the background, I merged three images (Road.jpg, Foggy.jpg and Sky.jpg). I first blended the road and foggy horizon by gently brushing in a layer mask and fine-tuning the hue and saturation to match, then I added the sky. I changed the Blending Mode to Screen and lowered the Opacity to 60%.

**3 Add mist**

With the background built up, it's time to create some drama by adding more mist in the distance. To achieve this, I used the Brush tool with a relatively small diameter on a new layer. The Mode was set to Dissolve and an Opacity of 20% selected before dapping the horizon. I then applied a low opacity Gaussian Blur.

**4 Add tree trunk**

I'll now bring in the tree trunk and position it on the right-hand side for good visual framing, with the canopy of a different tree merged with it. To blend these elements, I use a soft brush with a low opacity and a Softlight Blending Mode, using black for shading and white for highlights.

**5 Create depth**

To balance the image, I'll also add a small tree on the left-hand side of the frame. To create a sense of depth in the image, I'll lower the Saturation and Opacity of this layer by 25%, as well as masking the base of the tree. I'll now look at adding the main point of interest to the scene – the subject.

**6 Add the subject**

With the subject placed on the third of the image, I'll use the same shading techniques as I used with the tree trunk to fine-tune the image, as well as the Dodge and Burn tool. The saturation is also reduced, while I also build up the shadow on the ground that would have been cast by the angle of the sun.

**7 Global lighting**

This step is really important because it is where I set the overall global lighting effect for the entire montage. On a new layer I use the Gradient tool, picking Black & White, with the Style set to Radial, Reverse selected and the Blending Mode to Softlight. I then drag out the Gradient tool from top left to bottom right.

**8 Contrast**

I'm now going to balance the contrast of the image as it's looking pretty flat due to the low saturation and lighting effects I've applied earlier. I'll create a Brightness/Contrast Adjustment Layer, increasing the Brightness to +3 and Contrast to +56, as well as lowering the Yellow saturation of the image.

**9 Tone the image**

I now apply multiple adjustment layers: a Gradient fill (dark orange to brown, Hardlight Blending Mode, Opacity 40%), a solid brown (Overlay Blending Mode, 50%), a solid dark orange (Softlight Blending Mode, 50%), Photo Filter Warming Filter (81) (Normal Blending Mode, 20%), and a solid yellow (Multiply Blending Mode, 50%).

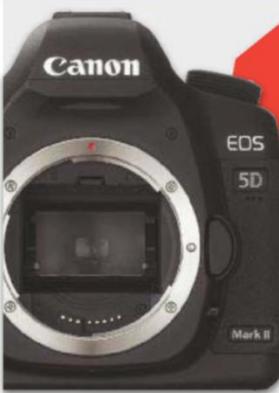


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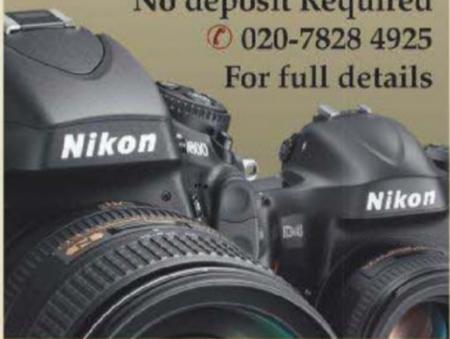
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APOY 2014 Amateur Photographer OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

IN A FARAWAY PLACE

This was perhaps our strongest round so far. Here are the top 30 images from APOY round 7 **In a Faraway Place**

Roberto Binder from London is the winner of round 7, In a Faraway Place (Travel Photography), of APOY 2014. Roberto will receive an Olympus OM-D E-M10 with a 14-42mm EZ Pancake zoom, a 45mm f/1.8 portrait lens, a 40-150mm zoom, a 9mm fisheye lens, a macro adapter and a street case in which to carry it all. That's total retail price of £1,200. The E-M10 has a 16.1-million-pixel, four thirds-sized CMOS sensor and a TruePic VII image-processing system. The 144-million-dot EVF displays a 100% field of view and has a 120fps refresh rate. The 14-42mm EZ Pancake zoom lens is a slim and compact optic that is equivalent to a 28-84mm lens in the 35mm format. The 45mm f/1.8 portrait optic is ideal for low-light people shots without flash, while the 40-150mm zoom has high-speed AF and is optimised for movies and stills. The 9mm fisheye lens is ideal for capturing wideangle scenes.

Our second-placed winner is Marta Hawrylow, also from London. She will receive an Olympus Pen E-PL5 camera plus a 14-42mm and 40-150mm twin-lens zoom kit worth £500.

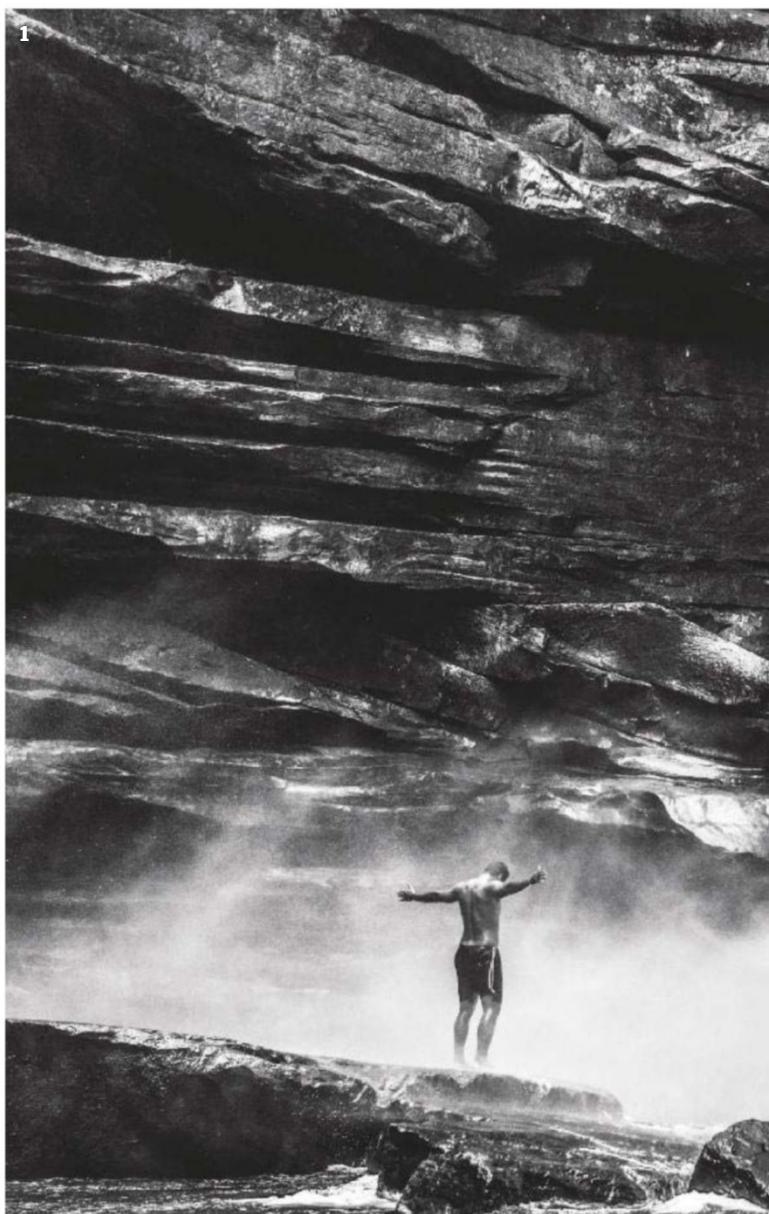
The E-PL5 offers serious image quality with its powerful 16.1-million-pixel sensor and a new OM-D component in the TruePic VI image processor. The camera has lightning-fast autofocus, a touch-sensitive LCD screen and full HD video.

Anthony Into from the Philippines takes third place in this round. He wins an Olympus Stylus SP-100EE Ultra Zoom camera, with an impressive 16-million-pixel sensor and 3in LCD screen. The camera includes a handy autofocus lock so you need never lose a shot due to fuzzy focusing. The camera features a 50x optical Ultra Zoom lens with a focal length ranging from 24mm to 1,200mm, and built-in Dot Sight to make it easier to focus on subjects.

The 2014 leaderboard

Mark Helliwell has remained in first place after taking the top spot last month. APOY regular Dan Deakin is now in second place, while Aaron Bennett is holding third place. Angela Nelson is currently in joint fourth place with Bertrand Chombart.

1	Mark Helliwell	184pts
2	Dan Deakin	169pts
3	Aaron Bennett	151pts
4	Angela Nelson	135pts
4	Bertrand Chombart	135pts
6	Gerard Sexton	115pts
7	Farid Sani	108pts
8	Sigita Playdon	107pts
9	Adrian Mills	105pts
10	Jevgenijs Scolokovs	102pts



**3 Anthony Into
Philippines 48pts**

Nikon D700, 14-24mm, 1/200sec
at f/8, ISO 100

Anthony's shot has so much going for it. The colours are vivid, the composition is perfect as is the lighting, and the central subject cannot help but capture the imagination. It's that balloon that really makes this image a stand out. A simple prop has become an engaging narrative element.



3





**1 Roberto Binder
London 50pts**

Nikon D800, 1/500sec at f/5.6, ISO 400

What makes a good travel image? You could factor in a variety of things, but we would say that it is a shot that conveys the experience of being in a particular place at a particular time. This beautiful image from Roberto, taken in Chapada Diamantina National Park in Brazil, is a wonderfully observed scene. You can almost hear the rushing water and feel the spray on your skin. It's a great shot and more than deserving of first place.

**2 Marta Hawrylow
London 49pts**

Canon EOS 60D, 17-70mm, 1/125sec at f/9, ISO 400

It was a tough call for the top spot in this round. Marta's shot of a child illuminated by what we assume to be a television set is a wonderful balance between documentary and tableau. The lighting within the scene is evocative and the careful framing holds it all together.



4 Jake Rutterford Cambridgeshire 47pts

Nikon D700, 11-16mm, 1/60sec at f/2.8, ISO 400

Jake's travel photography trip with a friend allowed him to capture this beautifully lit scene of a man still making shepherd's clothing by hand in the region of Sibiu, Romania

**5 Peter Warrington Oxfordshire 46pts**

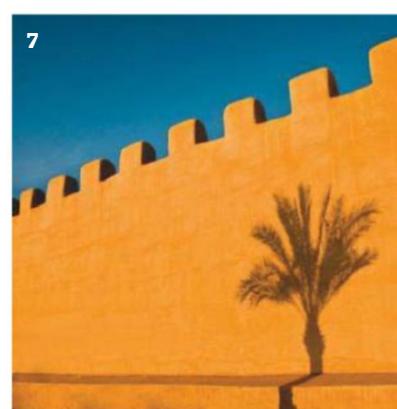
Pentax K-5, 10mm, 1/50sec at f/8, ISO 200

It's not often we receive aerial shots in APOY but this shot taken from a balloon is superbly composed. The boat is a great element

6 Bertrand Chombart France 45pts

Nikon D800E, 24mm, 1sec at f/8, ISO 100

A slow shutter gives a sense of the rush-hour chaos at this station in Prague

**7 Val Lear Cheshire 44pts**

Nikon D300, 16-85mm, 1/13sec at f/8, ISO 200

Despite this being an abstract image we still get a good sense of location and culture

8 Glenn Morley Essex 43pts

Nikon D610, 18-55mm, 1/160sec at f/16, ISO 100

A great graphic image of Spanish architecture here. The leading line through the centre of the frame is a particularly fine detail

9 Mark Helliwell Cheshire 42pts

Nikon D800, 28-300mm, 1/250sec at f/5.6, ISO 100

This is a genuinely powerful image. Not only is it visually brilliant but it also engages the viewer on an emotional level

10 Tony Gill Dorset 41pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/800 sec at f/8, ISO 400

There's an overwhelming atmosphere to this scene. However, the strength lies in the smaller details. Note the path leading in from the bottom right-hand corner

11 Andrew Blake Italy 40pts

Sony Alpha 100, 75mm, 1/80sec at f/4, ISO 100

Another wonderful abstract shot. The shot holds much back but the limited detail tells us all we need to know

12 Aaron Bennett Hampshire 39pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 17-40mm, 1/100sec at f/11, ISO 800

A rather clever shot from Aaron here, recording him in the act of shooting

**13 Ian Bramham Cheshire 38pts**

Nikon D700, 16-35mm, 18sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

Ian used a 10-stop Lee 'Big Stopper' filter over a circular 6-stop B+W ND filter to achieve this classically composed image

14 Phil Thomas Tyne and Wear 37pts

Fujifilm FinePix X100, 1/480sec at f/5.6, ISO 250

The early-morning mist and muted colours offer a strong sense of isolation in this image

15 Andy Barton Anglesey 36pts

Sony Alpha 600, 10-18mm, 30secs at f/5.6, ISO 100

This image demands viewing. The colours, abstract elements and perfectly captured lightning strikes over a Venetian skyline are fantastic

**16 Chris Wood Gloucestershire 35pts**

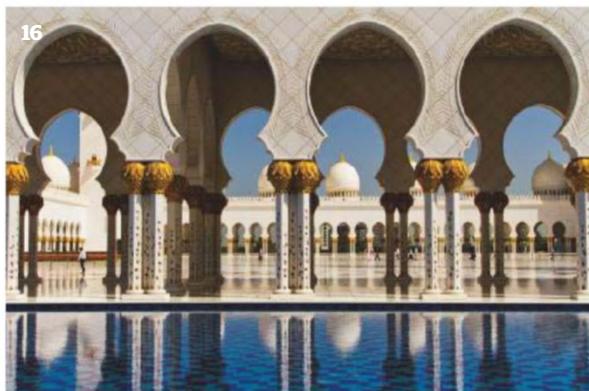
Canon EOS 7D, 17-40mm, 1/1000sec at f/8, ISO 100

'The beauty is in the details,' Chris says of his well-composed architectural shot

17 Adrian Squirell London 34pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH2, 45mm, 1/1000sec at f/2.8 ISO 160

Despite being taken in Italy, it's difficult not to get a sense of Ansel Adams in this image



18 Dan Deakin Nottinghamshire 33pts

Nikon D700, 70-200mm, 1.5secs at f/9.5, ISO 200

This is a stunning panoramic shot of Vancouver from Dan. The ND filter has given the image a striking balance in both the city and sky exposures

**19 Max Copestack Derbyshire** 32pts

Canon EOS 6D, 50mm, 1/250sec at f/2.5, ISO 1250

What we see here demonstrates that even with little money, the people of Ho Chi Minh are able to make a living from small businesses, using the means that are available to them

20 Csilla Szucs Somerset 31pts

Samsung NX200, 35mm, 1/400sec at f/16, ISO 200

Csilla has cleverly used the converging lines of the crosses to convey a powerful and emotive scene

21 Sam Rowell Lancashire 30pts

Ricoh Caplio GX100, 24mm, 1/1000sec at f/9, ISO 100

This is a beautifully framed shot of Mount Cook in New Zealand taken from inside a sheltered climbing hut

22 Ana Caroline Lima Brazil 29pts

Nikon D5000, 18-55mm, 1/200sec at f/7.1, ISO 200

Such an epic scene benefits from the sense of scale and context offered by the lone figure standing on the rock

23 Vincent Breyer France 28pts

Pentax K100D, 19mm, 1/350sec at f/6.7, ISO 200

This shot taken at 6am shows the golden morning light illuminating the overwhelming sight of Canada's Niagara Falls

24 Jasmine Bilson North Yorkshire 27pts

Nikon D3100, 18-55mm, 1/1250sec at f/5, ISO 200

By adhering to the Rule of Thirds, Jasmine has created a nice balance between the human element and the surrounding environment

25 Peter Fenech County Durham 26pts

Canon EOS 7D, 10-20mm, 2.5secs at f/16, ISO 100

Peter's image of fishing boats in Malta benefits from a cast of golden dawn light

26 Andrew Young Merseyside 25pts

Pentax K-5, 55mm, 1/100sec at f/13, ISO 400

It would have been an obvious choice to crop out the negative space of the sand, but its inclusion has given the image necessary depth

27 Anirban Ghosh India 24pts

Nikon D50, 18-200mm, 1/640sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

This is a beautiful shot that is full of the vibrant energy of childhood

28 Robert Maric Croatia 23pts

Canon EOS 5D, 17-40mm, 1/13sec at f/9, ISO 100

Robert's image of the Giau pass in the Italian Dolomites benefits from the gradient of light and colour shifting throughout the scene

29 Robert E Smith Tyne and Wear 22pts

Sony Alpha 700, 20mm, 10secs, at f/8, ISO 100, tripod

Incredibly, this dreamlike scene was lit entirely by the light of the moon

30 Brian Law Cheshire 21pts

Nikon D300S, 18-250mm, 1/500sec at f/6.7, ISO 800

This elderly gentleman was photographed at an open air market in Morocco. Placing the subject to the right has given the image a nice balance



'This is a beautifully framed shot (right) of Mount Cook in New Zealand taken from inside a sheltered climbing hut'



24



28





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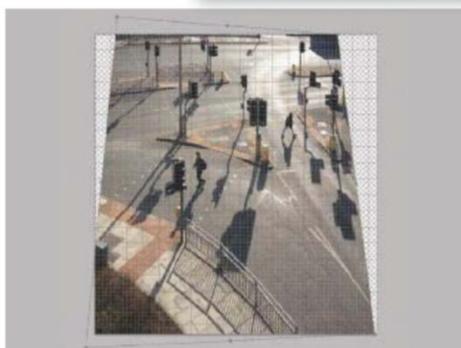
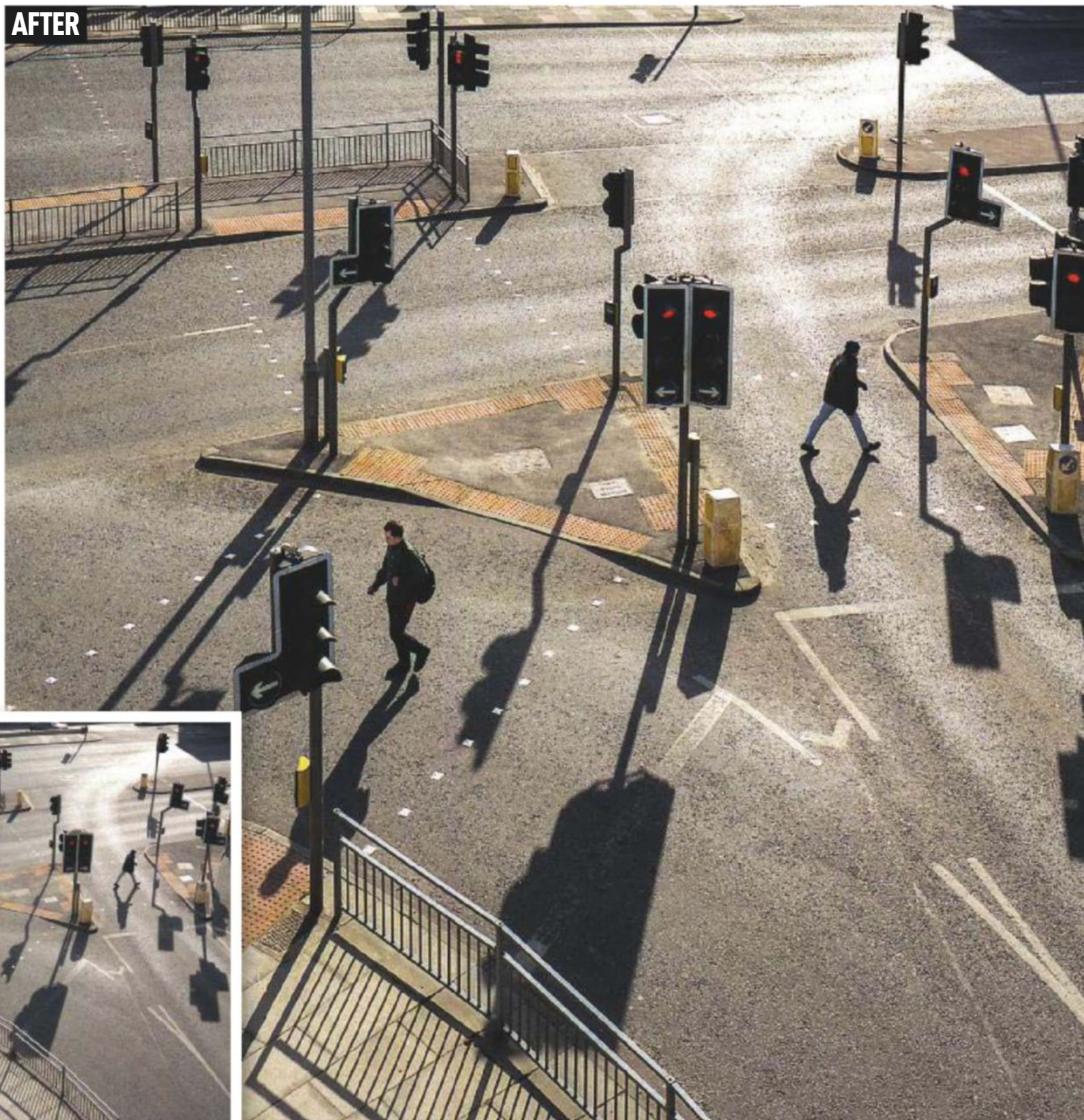
Photoshop guru Martin Evening sorts out your photo-editing and post-processing problems

Submit your images

Please see the 'Send us your pictures' section on page 3 for details or visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Aligning the verticals

THIS photograph is dominated by the long shadows of the traffic lights and lamp posts. Dave Clegg has captured a scene with strong graphic features, and my feeling was that this photograph needed just a few subtle adjustments. To start with, I used the Free Transform command to alter the shape of the image and straighten the vertical elements, which I felt would make the composition appear more solid. I also wanted to bring out the texture in the road surface and the best tool here was to apply a negative Highlights adjustment using Camera Raw as a filter in Photoshop CC. The final edited version therefore benefits from strong compositional elements and improved highlight detail.

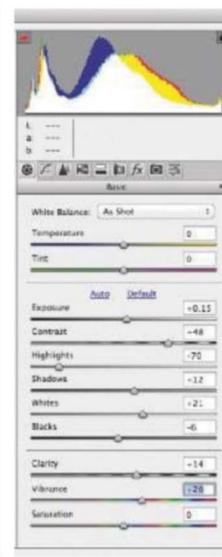


1 Aligning to the grid

The first step was to make the Grid view visible in Photoshop, which I did by going to the View menu and choosing Show > Grid. Next I went to the Edit menu and chose Transform > Free Transform. I was then able to refer to the grid lines as I adjusted the transform bounding box handles.

2 Apply the crop

I went to the Image menu and chose Reveal All. Having done that, I selected the Crop tool and dragged the bounding box handles to define the most suitable crop for this irregular-shaped transformed image. In this instance, I wanted to more or less match the squarish proportions of the original photograph.

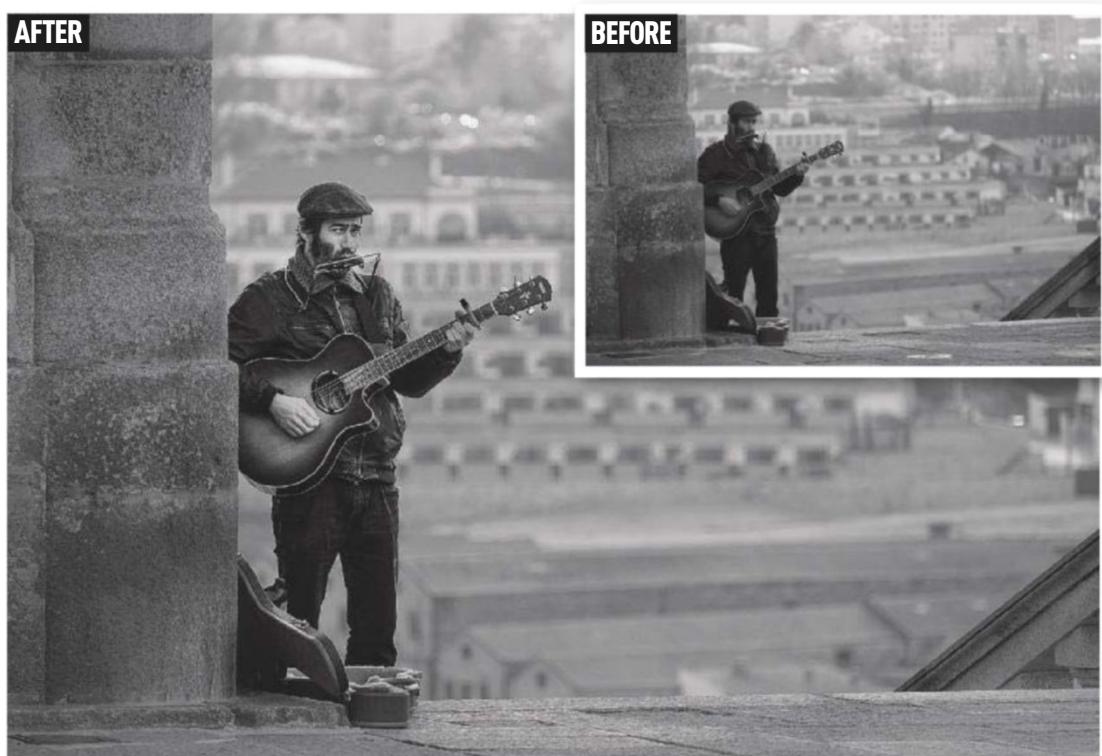


3 Camera Raw tone adjustments

For this next step, I decided to process the image using Camera Raw. To do this, I went to the Filter menu and chose Camera Raw Filter. This opened the image layer in the Camera Raw filter dialog, which is almost exactly the same as the regular Camera Raw dialog. Here, I fine-tuned the tones to bring out more detail in the shiny texture of the road surface.

Balancing the contrast

WHAT I liked about Dean Chapman's photograph was the hazy, soft contrast in the background and how this helped to isolate the figure of the busker in the foreground. The fact that the man's body is partly concealed behind the wall is actually a good thing. But I did think he was rather dark in the original image. My aim in the following steps was to focus on adding more lightness and contrast to the busker so that he stood out more. At the same time, I used localised graduated filter adjustments to tone down the contrast in the wall and paving stones. Basically, the central figure stands out by enhancing the tone contrast on the central subject and reducing the contrast on everything else.



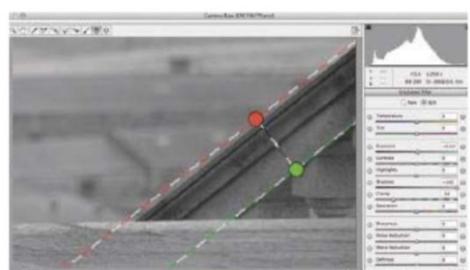
1 Apply an upright adjustment

The first step was to open the image above, go to the Filter menu and choose Camera Raw Filter. This opened the Camera Raw filter dialog, where, initially, I went to the Lens Corrections panel and applied a Full Upright adjustment to straighten horizontal and vertical lines.



2 Localised brush adjustment

I then selected the adjustment brush. Here I set the Exposure slider to lighten. I also increased the Contrast as well as the Clarity. By painting with this combination of settings, I was able to add more contrast and lightness to the busker.



3 Localised image softening

I now wanted to soften the rest of the photograph. In this step I selected the Graduated filter. I set the Shadows to +100 and the Clarity to -56. I then applied a gradient from left to right to soften the wall, another at the bottom to soften the pavement and a third to soften the handrail on the steps.

Camera Raw filter

PHOTOSHOP CC saw the very welcome introduction of Camera Raw as a filter, which you can now apply to images directly in Photoshop. Previously, you could only apply Camera Raw to non-raw files that were in the TIFF or JPEG format. Now, you can apply Camera Raw as a filter to any format of image as long as it is open in Photoshop and in a supported colour space. It also means that you can apply Camera Raw adjustments to individual layers as well as complete images. If you wish to apply Camera Raw as a filter to groups of layers, or to a single layer, where

you wish the results to be re-editable, it will be necessary to convert the image layer(s) to a smart object first. However, when you do this, you will soon be aware that this will cause the file size to increase dramatically. This is not such a big issue if you are editing master images, but not something that would be practical to do if batch processing a large number of images. Overall, it is a really useful feature to have for general Photoshop editing, because you can now apply Camera Raw adjustments at almost any stage in the image editing process.

Filter	3D	View	Window	Help
Unsharp Mask				⌘ F
Convert for Smart Filters				
Filter Gallery...				
Adaptive Wide Angle...	⌥ ⌘ A			
Camera Raw Filter...	⇧ ⌘ A			
Lens Correction...	⇧ ⌘ R			
Liquify...	⇧ ⌘ X			
Vanishing Point...	⌥ ⌘ V			
Blur				
Blur Gallery				
Distort				

Martin Evening is a noted expert in both photography and digital imaging. He is well known in London for his fashion and beauty work, for which he has won several awards. Martin has worked with the Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom engineering teams over many years and is one of the founding members of a software design company. Visit www.martinevening.com

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We help children to rebuild their lives, and we find ways to prevent abuse from ruining any more. So when a child needs a helping hand, we'll be there. When parents are finding it tough, we'll help. When laws need to change, or governments need to do more, we won't give up until things improve. But we cannot achieve any of this without the help of our partners like Time Inc. (UK) and its readership.

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Michael Topham tests Western Digital's new Wi-Fi hard drive with a built-in SD card slot for wireless back-up on the move

At a glance

- Windows/Mac compatible
- Wi-Fi, SD card slot and USB 3.0 interface
- Built-in battery, charged via USB socket

There's been a flurry of Wi-Fi enabled hard drives hitting the market of late, but Western Digital My Passport Wireless goes one better in the way that it offers an SD card interface, making it an ideal solution for photographers who'd like to back up on the go and control it via WD's My Cloud app using a smartphone or tablet. Inserting an SD card with 5.45GB of data on it and transferring this to the drive took 11 minutes, 38 seconds – significantly slower than the USB 3.0 interface it also provides, but an acceptable speed nonetheless. There's the option to import an SD card data automatically as soon as it is inserted, and imports aren't interrupted when the Wi-Fi network is changed. The WD My Cloud app also allows users to email, print, or open images in other photo editing apps such as PS Touch or Snapseed.

Conclusion

The negative aspects are its six-hour battery life, its fairly plasticky build quality and the fact that the 2TB version is fairly bulky compared with the thinner 1TB and 500GB versions. As a device for photographers who use a camera that accepts SD media though, it's invaluable for backing up your images when you are on the move or on location when carrying a bulky laptop isn't a practical option.



ALSO CONSIDER

PCorsair Voyager Air 1TB

From £112, wwwcorsair.com

With a battery life of up to seven hours and a 90ft wireless range, the Corsair Voyager has a custom app for iOS and Android devices, however, it lacks an SD card port for instant image back-up like the WD My Passport Wireless.



Seagate Wireless Plus 2TB

From £161, www.seagate.com

Available in 500GB, 1TB and 2TB capacities, it boasts an impressive ten-hour battery life and allows users to stream up to three different HD movies to three devices. Much like the Corsair Voyager Air though, it doesn't support an SD card slot.



LaCie FUEL 2TB

From £166, www.lacie.com

Supported by the intuitive LaCie Media app, this wireless mobile drive has a ten-hour battery life, a robust build quality and comes available in 1TB or 2TB capacities. The only thing it's missing is an SD card slot.



Out now

Expert reviews of the latest kit to look out for

Hoya ProND200 and ProND1000 Filters

- From £34-£184 (depending on strength and filter size)
- www.intro2020.co.uk

HOYA'S premium ProND filter range is designed to produce images with a completely neutral colour balance. The filters come in various sizes, ranging from 49-82mm filter threads, and in strengths from the ProND200, which offers a 1EV reduction, to the ProND1000, which filters out 10EV of light.

We tested the PROND200, which offers 7 2/3 EV reduction, alongside the ProND1000 and found the claims about a neutral colour cast are true. With each of the filters, in a variety of different lighting conditions, neither filter displayed any colour cast. We also tested the filters on a camera converted for infrared use and can confirm that they block infrared light just as efficiently as visible light.

Richard Sibley



**Amateur
Photographer**
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★

Click Stick

- £19.99
- www.menkind.co.uk

Before you say 'not another selfie stick', the Click Stick is a little more advanced. The seven-section pole extends from 20cm to 1metre, offering a good length to shoot self-portraits, or selfies as they are now known. The clever part is the fact that the stick has a button built-in to the handle that is connected to a 3.5mm jack that plugs in to the headphone socket of the phone. This sends a signal to the phone that triggers the camera shutter, so there is no need to connect via Bluetooth or set a self-timer. A small switch on the handle switches the stick for use with Android or Apple iOS.

If selfies are of no interest to you then the button also has the ability to start and stop video recording, and using the stick can create smooth panning shots. While the clamp-on stick is

designed for smartphone cameras, it can be removed, revealing a 1/4-inch tripod screw for attaching a standard camera, though obviously the shutter button on the handle won't work.

For smartphone photographers, it is a useful device at reasonable price.

Richard Sibley



**Amateur
Photographer**
Testbench
Recommended
★★★★★

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At a glance

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- Compact design for a full-frame DSLR
- ISO 50-51,200 (extended)
- 3.2in, vari-angle tilting LCD with 1.23-million-dot resolution
- Price £1,799 (body only)
- Highlight priority metering

Nikon D750

With a full-frame 24.3-million-pixel sensor and an updated autofocus module, is the D750 the perfect all-rounder?

Callum McInerney-Riley finds out

For and against

- + 24.3-million-pixel sensor
- Maximum 1/4000sec shutter speed
- + Built-in Wi-Fi
- No dedicated AF-on button
- + Tiltable LCD
- No GPS
- + 7fps

Where in the range?

**Nikon D810****Price** £2,399

Featuring a 36.3-million-pixel sensor, impressive dynamic range and the same 51-point AF system.

**Nikon D610****Price** £1,749

24.3-million-pixel full-frame sensor with 39 focus point and a shooting speed of 6 fps in DX Crop Mode.

Data file

Sensor	24.3-million-pixel, FX CMOS
Output size	6016 x 4016 pixels
Focal length mag	1x
Lens mount	Nikon F
File format	Raw (NEF), JPEG, raw + JPEG
Shutter speeds	30-1/4000sec
ISO	ISO 100-12,800 (standard), ISO 50-51,200 (extended)
Exposure modes	PASM
Metering	Multi, centreweighted, spot, highlight-weighted
Drive	7 frames per second
Movie	Full HD, 1920 x 1080 pixels, 60p
Viewfinder	0.7x magnification, 100% coverage
Display	3.2in, tiltable 1,229,000-dot screen
Focusing	51 focus points (inc 15 cross-type sensors; f/8 supported by 11 sensors)
Memory card	SD, SDHC, SDXC
Dimensions	140.5 x 113 x 78 mm
Weight	980g (with battery and card)



With 24.3-million-pixels, the sensor of the D750 captures plenty of detail and also it strikes a good balance between file size and resolution

It feels like the dust has only just settled on the announcement of the D810, and now Nikon has added a fifth model to its current full-frame DSLR line-up. The new Nikon D750 occupies a space between the D610 and the D810, and Nikon says it's designed with the aspirational enthusiast photographer in mind. It has the same 24.3-million-pixel resolution as the D610, but inherits many of the latest options we saw on the D810, including highlight weighted metering and 'flat' video recording mode. The D750 adds a few new features of its own, including a tiltable LCD screen. On paper, the D750 is an enthusiast DSLR smattered with some professional standard features.

Features

At the heart of the Nikon D750 is a 35mm full-frame FX CMOS image sensor with a resolution of 24.3-million-pixels. This is the same resolution boasted by the Nikon D610, although Nikon says this is a newly designed sensor. Unlike the D810 and the D750's DX sensor stablemates, the D750 has an optical low-pass filter that will reduce moiré patterning at the expense of some of the finer detail.

With the latest Expeed 4 processor on board, Nikon claims it has made improvements to the Automatic White Balance accuracy and the in-camera processing of JPEG images. The D750 offers a respectable shooting speed to 6.5 frames per second at full resolution. It has a 1.5x DX crop mode as well as a 1.2x crop mode, which is great for users who own DX lenses.

The native sensitivity is ISO 100-12,800, and this can be extended to ISO 50-51,200. This is a full stop higher than the D610 for both native and extended ISO.

The D750 is Nikon's first full-frame DSLR to have built-in Wi-Fi. Using an Android or iOS smartphone or tablet coupled with the Nikon Wireless Mobile Utility app, users can browse through their pictures, download images and then share them quickly and easily. The connectivity also enables remote-controlled shooting with live view from the mobile device. It's important for Wi-Fi users to set a password to secure the connection; this is done from 'WMA Settings' submenu in the Nikon app (see our guide on the AP website).

Lots of features we saw in the Nikon D810 have made their way on to the Nikon D750,





When walking several miles up and down a rugged Scottish river, I found that the compact design helped make the D750 far more bearable to lug around

► particularly in the area of video. A zebra-striping tool warns users when highlight detail might be blown out, by displaying stripes over the affected areas. 'Flat' Picture Control mode allows users to record video with minimal processing, giving more leeway for sharpening and colour grading in post-production. For users looking to change exposure during recording, Power Aperture opens the lens iris seamlessly during live view. As a result, the exposure transition is very smooth and doesn't change suddenly as it can with other cameras. Video can be captured in full HD 1920x1080, at 60, 50, 30, 25 or 24 fps.

Build and handling

The D750 is the first full-frame Nikon DSLR to feature the monocoque – a one-piece structure body design previously seen on the Nikon D5300. The main benefit is smaller size; measuring just 140.5 x 113 x 78mm the D750 is 4mm slimmer than the D610, despite its tilting screen.

The front of the camera is constructed from a mix of thermoplastic and a lightweight carbon fibre reinforcement. The rear and top – the places most likely to take a knock – are reassuringly made from magnesium alloy, which brings the weight to 840g with battery and card. Overall, this is still quite heavy, especially when compared with some of the polycarbonate DSLRs available, or compact-system cameras. However, users can be assured of the sturdiness and high level of build quality offered by the D750.

Although it's smaller in size, the D750 still feels very balanced. This is largely thanks to the very deep grip on the front of the camera.

When I was walking with the camera, coupled with the Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 lens, I found that it still felt very secure in hand.

Many of Nikon's pro-orientated cameras do not feature a mode dial, but instead have buttons for core camera settings. However, the Nikon D750 is more akin to the enthusiast photographers' range of cameras, with a similar control layout to the D610. With a mode dial featured on the top left, most of the key settings are taken care of by the buttons running down the left side of the LCD, and adjusted using the front and back scroll wheels.

Unlike the D810, there is no dedicated AF-ON button next to the AF-L/AE-L button. This can be very useful for locking focus or engaging the continuous AF. This function can however be assigned to the AE-L button or either of the custom function buttons on the front of the camera. It's a tad disappointing to see no dedicated button included on the D750, but perhaps this is to be expected on a non-professional camera.

LCD/viewfinder

One of the highlights we found on the Nikon D810 is the new RGBW display. Thankfully, the same LCD is used on the D750. This is a 3.2in display that boasts a resolution of 1.23 million dots. It offers improved contrast and colour rendition, and is also easier to view in bright light. The D750 is the first full-frame DSLR to have a tiltable LCD display. Although it's not fully articulated, it can be positioned facing upwards or downwards for shooting at high or low angles. Undoubtedly, this element will be well received by videographers.

The display can also be colour balanced, which is of

Focal points

The D810 offers a comprehensive feature set, with some useful refinements over the D800/D800E

Eye-Fi support

In addition to the Wi-Fi functionality, the D750 also supports Eye-Fi cards for quick and easy file sharing with a mobile device.

Crop modes

The D750 offers 1.2x and 1.5x crop modes, which are indicated by frame lines in the viewfinder.

Pop-up flash

With a guide number of 12m at ISO100, this can be used as a commander for off-camera units.

Customising movie record button

By default the movie record button is only active when using live view. In non-live view the movie record button can be assigned to white balance selection, ISO sensitivity or image area, giving users quicker control over settings



LCD screen

A new 3.2in LCD monitor with a 1.23-million-dot resolution and RGBW array is tiltable.

Dual card slots

Two SD cards can be used at the same time, which allows different file types written to each.





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great use to video-shooters as it enables them to shoot alongside an external monitor and then calibrate the two together.

Autofocus

Inside the D750 is a newly developed Multi-Cam 3500FX Mark II Autofocus module. This brings the ability to focus at -3EV, whereas the previous version used in the D810 is only sensitive down to -2EV. Put simply, the D750 is sensitive enough to focus in near darkness.

As with the D810, a total of 51 Autofocus points are offered. Of these, 15 are cross-type and 11 are sensitive to f/8 – intended for use with lens and teleconverter. Users can select various groupings of AF points, and move them around the scene quickly and easily using the D-pad while looking through the viewfinder.

The 91,000-pixel colour-sensitive metering sensor helps the D750 to stay locked on to moving subjects, while the new AF module means the autofocus is incredibly fast even in low-light situations. Also, in live view the contrast detection AF does a good job of finding focus reasonably quickly. It's absolutely brilliant to see a professional grade AF system on an enthusiast DSLR.

Metering

A 91,000-pixel RGB colour and metering sensor is featured inside the Nikon D750; the same as used in the D810. Also, the Highlight Metering Mode is carried over from the D810, which aims to ensure that highlight detail isn't blown. This has been a popular feature with wedding photographers in order to avoid blown-out highlights on wedding dresses. I found that it is equally useful when shooting sunsets, to maximise highlight detail and then bring up the shadows in post-production. The matrix metering also performs well, giving accurate exposures even in challenging conditions. Due to the large array of focus points, the spot metering works particularly well.

White balance and colour

With the same RGB metering sensor as the D810, the D750's auto white balance performs well. The colours were punchy and well saturated on a variety of subjects. The D750 can also perform spot-white balance in live view. This is especially useful for videographers, as they can quickly and easily set the correct white balance.



Lab results

Andrew Sydenham's lab tests reveal just how the camera performs

THE D750 uses a 24-million-pixel full-frame sensor that includes an optical low pass filter, although residual maze-like moiré in the resolution charts indicates that the low-pass filter is relatively weak.

This means that in terms of resolution the D750 is similar to the D610 that sits below it in the range, but obviously it cannot deliver as much detail as the 36-million-pixel D810. Dynamic range is very impressive at low

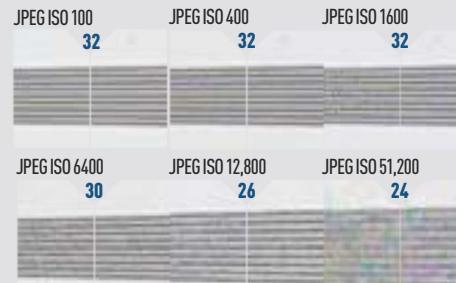
ISOs, you can therefore extract lots of detail from deep in the shadows in raw processing, or using the Active D-Lighting controls in JPEG. The camera's highlight metering mode can help to get the best exposures for raw shooters, by minimising clipping in bright areas of the shot.

Image quality is excellent at sensitivities up to ISO 1600, but at higher ISOs it naturally deteriorates. However ISO 3200

and 6400 are absolutely fine for less-critical purposes, especially when carefully processed from raw. At the highest ISOs JPEGs suffer from strong colour noise and detail loss, and while better results can be had from raw, this will usually come at the cost of colour saturation.

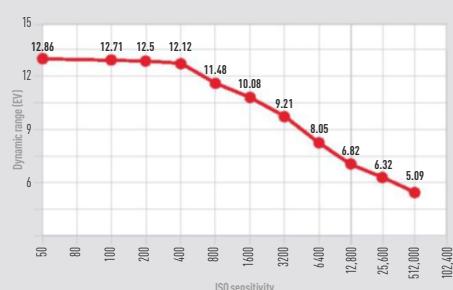
Overall the D750 is a very strong performer indeed, and bettered only by much more expensive cameras.

Resolution



The D750 resolved around a maximum 3200lp/ph on our Applied Imaging test chart, which is about what we'd expect for its pixel count. At ISO 6400, the resolution drops only slightly, to around 3000lp/ph. But at higher sensitivities noise reduction inevitably reduces the sharpness, giving approx 2400lp/ph at ISO 51,200. This test was shot with the Sigma 105mm f/2.8 macro lens, which we use for all our testing and have in all available fittings, at f/5.6 which is the best performing aperture for the lens.

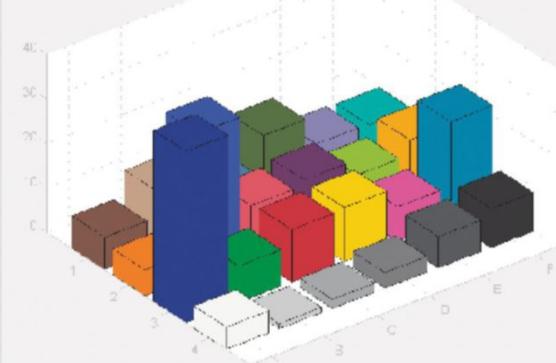
Dynamic range



The D750's sensor delivers excellent results, on a par with the D810. At ISO 50, the peak dynamic range is 12.9EV, and the sensor is still performing well at ISO 3200 with a range of 9.7EV. This means that the D750 can record lots of detail deep into shadow areas, which can then be recovered from raw files, or incorporated into the camera's JPEGs using the Active D-Lighting control. It's still important to avoid highlight clipping though, to reap the full benefits of this impressive dynamic range.

Colour

This 3D graph compares the colour shift from the reference colour to the photographed chart: the higher the peak, the greater the shift from the original colour. In the default JPEG colour setting, colours are well rendered across the range, with slightly enhanced greens and notably strong blues. Test images display generally natural colour rendition in standard JPEG mode, with pleasing saturation and contrast; the accentuated blues should be particularly good for scenic shots. Colour settings can of course be adjusted in the Picture Control menu settings.



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Noise

Both raw and JPEG images taken from our diorama scene are captured at the full range of ISO settings. The camera is placed in its default setting for JPEG images. Raw images are sharpened and noise reduction applied, to strike the best balance between resolution and noise.

JPEG ISO 100



JPEG ISO 400



JPEG ISO 1600



JPEG ISO 6400



JPEG ISO 12,800



JPEG ISO 51,200



The images above have a resolution of 300ppi and are shown at 100% magnification, reflecting a full-resolution print size.

The D750 produces clean, detailed images up to ISO 1600. At ISO 3200 and above, chroma noise starts to appear in the JPEGs, especially in shadow regions. However this can be removed in raw processing with little impact on

detail. The penalty, however, is pronounced luminance noise coupled with a loss of colour saturation. Images are still quite usable at ISO 6400, and even at ISO 12,800 with careful processing.

As we'd expect to see, the extended higher ISO settings come with serious image quality penalties in terms of noise and detail loss.

JPEG ISO 100



JPEG ISO 400



JPEG ISO 1600



JPEG ISO 6400



JPEG ISO 12,800



The grey-card images above are JPEG files shot with the D750's default noise reduction and colour settings applied. The 300ppi images are shown at 100% magnification to reflect the noise that would be experienced when printing an image at maximum size.

The results show the D750 is almost noise-free up to ISO 400, and still gives

impressively clean images at ISO 1600. Noise starts to become obvious at higher settings, and by ISO 12,800 both colour and luminance noise are starting to kick in, with ISO 25,600 and ISO 51,200 a lot worse.

However, there will always be situations where the extended settings will obtain shots not otherwise achievable.

The competition

Canon EOS 5D Mark III

Price £2,899

With 6fps shooting speed and a 22.3-million-pixel sensor, the Canon is an excellent DSLR.



Sony Alpha 7

Price £1,299

The Alpha 7 has a 24.3-million-pixel sensor and boasts great dynamic range.



Nikon D610

Price £1,749

The D610 has a similar sensor and body style but lacks many of the D750's latest features.



Sensor	22.3-million-pixel CMOS sensor	24.3-million-pixel Exmor CMOS sensor	24.7-million-pixel FX CMOS sensor
Focal length range	100-25,600	50-25,600	100-6400 (50-25,600 exp)
Mount	EF mount	FE mount	F
AF points	61	117	39-point dynamic-area
Display	3.2in, 1.04-million-dot LCD	Tiltable 3in, 921,600-dot TFT LCD	3.2in, 921,000-dot TFT LCD
Viewfinder	0.71x pentaprism	2.36-million-dot OLED EVF	0.7x pentaprism
Dimensions	152 x 116.4 x 76.4mm	126.9 x 94.4 x 48.2mm	141 x 113 x 82 mm
Weight	950g	474g with battery and card	850g with battery and card

Our verdict

Nikon has covered almost every feature likely to appear on the wish list of an enthusiast photographer and added a few extra for good measure. It's great to see Wi-Fi inside a high-end DSLR and a host of video-based advancements. The build quality of the camera is very good and it strikes a great balance between the size and weight. Thanks to the large grip at the front, the D750 feels incredible in hand. The D810 was praised for its good handling but, for me, the D750 has the edge for comfort, particularly when walking around with larger lenses. With the mode dial, button layout and menu system being akin to Nikon's entry-level DSLRs, the amateur photographer upgrading to full-frame should feel right at

home. Resolution of the D750 is, of course, not as good as cameras such as the D810/D800E, but for the majority of photographers the 24.3-million-pixel sensor should adequately quench the thirst for megapixels. Landscape photographers might like more, but the D750 should be perfectly capable of making detailed A2 (16x24in) prints. Also, the dynamic range is among the best in its class. One of the biggest highlights of the D750 is the auto-focusing system. It performed brilliantly in all conditions, finding focus quickly and accurately.

Nikon has created a camera that has all the fundamentals right and, as a result, the D750 is one of the best all-around DSLR cameras currently available.



FEATURES	9/10
BUILD & HANDLING	9/10
METERING	8/10
AUTOFOCUS	9/10
AWB & COLOUR	8/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	9/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	8/10

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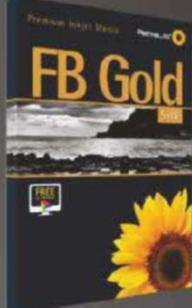
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Sony's unconventional QX1 connects to tablets and smartphones by Wi-Fi and accepts E-mount lenses



At a glance

- 20.1-million-pixel, APS-C CMOS sensor
- Takes Sony E-mount lenses
- Bionz X processor
- Records both JPEG and raw
- ISO 100-16,000
- Uses Sony PlayMemories Mobile app, for iOS, Android and Windows devices
- Price £249

Tips on Sony's Q

Sony's 2G lens-style cameras have arrived, including the curiously quirky **QX1**, which features the ability to use E-mount lenses. **Richard Sibley** tries it out

Sony's QX range was one of the most-talked about camera announcements of 2013. Sony devised the term 'lens-style camera' to describe the new devices, based on the fact that they were primarily a lens and image sensor combined. With no screen, the QX cameras need to be connected via Wi-Fi to a tablet or smartphone, on which the Sony PlayMemories Mobile app can be used to compose images, change settings and playback images and videos that have been captured.

Images are saved to a micro-SD card inside the QX camera, but either full resolution or 2-million-pixel resolution images can also be sent to the smart device, allowing them then to be edited or shared on social media or via email. The cameras are primarily designed for those that enjoy the interface offered by a smartphone camera, but aren't satisfied with the built-in

camera, perhaps because of low-light performance or lack of zoom.

The first pair of cameras, the QX10 and QX100 had 10x and 3x optical zoom lenses respectively. However, whereas the QX10 had a 20-million-pixel compact camera-size sensor, the QX100 used a larger 20-million-pixel 1in sensor, the same as used in the RX100 enthusiast compact camera. This more premium version offered the image quality of the RX100, but was around £150 cheaper at the time of release.

Now Sony has taken the concept a step further with the QX1, which is essentially a 20.1-million-pixel APS-C size sensor with a Sony E-mount. Imagine taking the Alpha 5000 compact-system camera and removing the rear screen, the majority of the buttons and the grip; that is the QX1.

It seems such a bizarre approach to designing a camera system and

integrating it with smartphone technology that I couldn't help but get excited by the novelty of it all.

Connection

With such limited features on the QX1, the camera itself is straightforward to set up. It takes micro-SD cards and the same NP-FW50 battery that is used in all of Sony's compact system cameras. This is charged via a micro USB connection, which is useful as it's the same one used to charge many mobile phones and tablets (though not Apple devices). The only other features on the QX1 are a tiny LCD panel showing the battery life, Wi-Fi connection and whether a card is inserted; the power and shutter buttons; and a tiny pop-up flash with a guide number of 4m.

To connect to a smartphone you need to turn on the QX1, select its Wi-Fi connection on the phone, input the password

Third-party lenses

ONE OF the most interesting aspects of the Cyber-shot QX1 is its ability to 'shoot without lens'. What this means is that the camera doesn't need to have a recognised lens attached in order to enable it to take images. In real terms, this means that you can use lens adapters on the QX1, enabling third-party lenses to be mounted, just as they can on other Sony E-mount cameras.

In terms of functionality, the QX1 operates largely as normal, although obviously without the ability to change the aperture or autofocus. I tried the QX1 using a 1962 Nikkor 50mm f/1.4 lens and was able to take some nice floral shots utilising the f/1.4 aperture to create a very shallow depth of field.

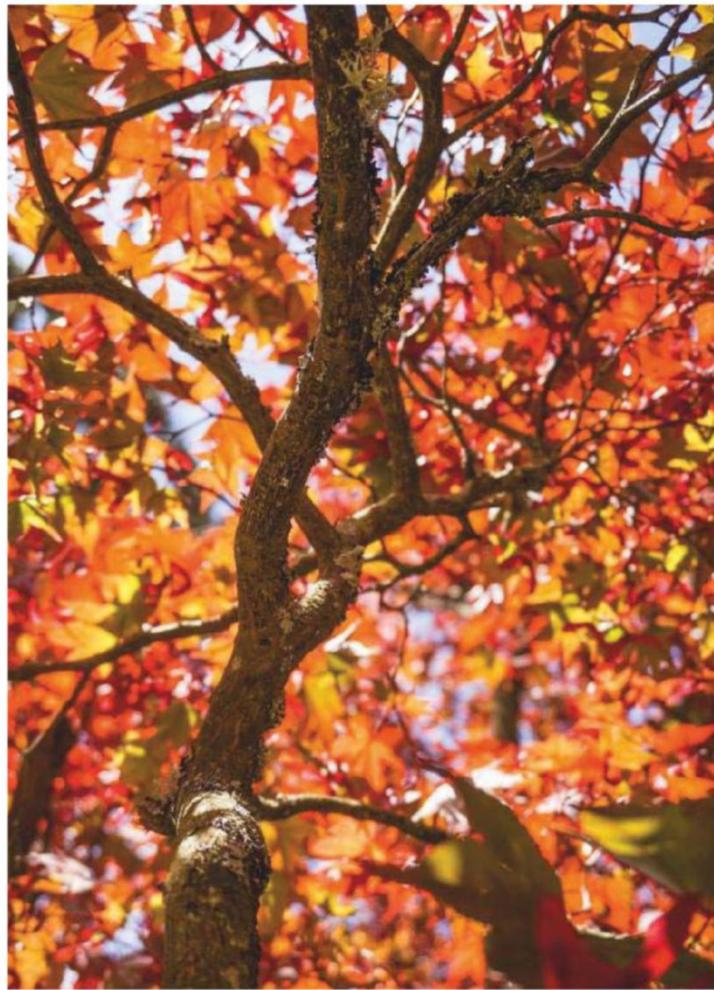
Being able to use virtually any SLR lens on the QX1 via adapters is a neat trick, and it offers a very

different experience to using such a lens on a more conventional compact system camera. Instead of holding the camera, I found that you hold the lens with two hands, one to use the manual focus ring and the other to hold the QX1 and fire its shutter. This leaves the smartphone floating on the back, almost like a DSLR does when using a large telephoto lens.

So is there a real benefit to using the QX1 with a third-party lens and adapter? If you have a camera that doesn't have Wi-Fi and you want to be able to use your current lenses, then the QX1 does offer this feature, and, at £249 including the kit lens, it is a fairly inexpensive way of doing so, given the price of most CSC cameras with Wi-Fi.



Many old SLR lenses can be mounted on the QX1 via adapters. This is a 1962 Nikkor 50mm f/1.4



With its APS-C sensor, the QX1 allows creative control over depth of field

'The handling of the QX camera is unique, largely due to the fact that the camera and the smartphone do not need to be physically connected in any way'

(printed inside the battery door) and then open the Sony PlayMemories Mobile app. The password isn't required on subsequent connections. If your phone has NFC, you can bypass this process simply by touching the two devices together. This will even open up the PlayMemories mobile app, or if you don't have it, take you to its download page on the Google Play store. Manual connection takes less than a minute, and NFC just seconds. Once the devices are paired, you can start shooting.

In use

The handling of the QX camera is unique, largely due to the fact that the camera and smartphone don't need to be physically connected in any way. The camera comes with a sprung mount to attach it to a

smartphone, but this doesn't have to be used. So you can hold a smartphone in one hand, acting as a live-view screen, and the camera in the other, moving it around at all sorts of angles. While you can do this with other cameras with a Wi-Fi connection, the shape of the QX1 positively encourages it.

There is a slight delay in the Wi-Fi between the devices, resulting in a small lag in the display. Touching the screen focuses the lens on the corresponding part of the image. Again there is a lag, and focusing with the 16–50mm power zoom lens isn't the fastest. But overall the touch-focus facility works well, and again feels like the natural thing to do when using a smartphone.

The fastest method of shooting is to use the shutter button on the QX1 itself. As long as the lens is

focused, this takes a shot as quickly as any other camera. By default, a preview image is then sent to the mobile device and displayed on screen for a few seconds. This can get a little annoying if you wish to take another shot, so I disabled the preview setting in the app.

Image control and quality

With the same Bionz processing engine and 20.1-million-pixel APS-C size sensor as the Alpha 5000, the image quality is virtually identical. You can shoot raw and JPEG images, with the raw images saved on the memory card and a JPEG preview sent to the phone. This elevates the QX1 above being just a gimmick, by offering excellent image quality.

Changing the camera's shooting settings must be done via the Sony

PlayMemories Mobile app. Shooting modes include Auto, Intelligent Auto, Program and Aperture priority. Depending on the mode, it is possible to change the aperture, exposure compensation, white balance and ISO sensitivity. You can also switch to manual focusing and continuous shooting.

The range of options in the menu isn't as comprehensive as you would see on a compact system camera, but it's enough to feel as if you are involved in creating the image. However, changing settings can be a little fiddly if you have a smartphone with a smaller screen.

Lenses

Of course, the highlight feature of the QX1 is its ability to use E-mount lenses. It was fun being able to switch between different optics,



The QX1's 20-million-pixel sensor records an impressive amount of detail

knowing that the image quality would match that of a compact system camera. If you wish to use the QX1 and a lens larger than the 16–50mm power zoom, though, you need a lot of faith in the sprung clip that attaches it to a phone. This is much stronger than it looks, but you'll find that you hold the lens more than the smartphone.

Final thoughts

In terms of image quality you can't really fault the QX1, particularly given its price – just £249 including the power zoom lens. The images are what you would expect from a Sony CSC with an APS-C sensor, particularly if you spend some time editing the raw images. There is a lot of detail to be extracted.

Of course, handling is quirky to say the least, though once you get used to it you do start to become more creative, moving the QX1 away from the smartphone and shooting at all sorts of angles. As for the ability to change lenses, this makes the QX1 more valuable than its predecessors, certainly for enthusiast photographers. The ability to use third-party lenses

adds further to its interest.

However, the QX1 is still something of a curio. It is an interesting camera, and I am looking forward to seeing how photographers find some weird and wonderful uses for it. And that perhaps is where the QX1's market lies. Many photographers have long asked for a camera where you can update or replace the sensor for different uses, and while the QX1 doesn't yet fulfil that task, it could be heading that way. In a few years' time, you could have a choice between versions with different resolutions and types of sensor. Simply choose the one that suits your photography.

With a tripod socket at the bottom of the camera, it is surely only a matter of time before Sony, or a third-party manufacturer, introduces a grip or shell for the QX1. With a few buttons it could make navigating the PlayMemories Mobile app faster, and provide better handling. With this one accessory we could move towards a customisable camera range that many have wanted for years, but we aren't quite there yet.

AP

Focal points

Quirky handling aside, the Sony QX1 has some useful features and capabilities...

MicroSD

Images are recorded to microSD cards, that are inserted in a socket behind the battery door.

Video

The QX1 can record video at full 1080p HD quality with footage saved in MP4 format. Audio is captured using the camera's stereo microphones.

Autofocus

Lenses can be focused by touching any part of the image on the smartphone, or in automatic mode one of 25 contrast detection points are used.



Shooting rate

At its maximum speed, the QX1 can shoot at 3.5fps.

Pop-up flash

This small flash is useful for fill-in flash on bright days and has a guide number of 4m @ ISO 100.



Sensitivity

With a sensitivity range of ISO 100–16,000, the QX1 is more than capable of shooting in most lighting conditions photographers will throw at it.



Focal length: 600mm Exposure: F/9 1/100 sec ISO800 © Ian Plant



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Lens advice for D800

Q I have a Nikon D800 with the 24-70 F2.8 and I am delighted with the quality of the results. I am thinking of adding a couple of prime lenses – one for landscape and a macro for plant photography. I have been thinking about the Nikon 24mm and 105mm macro, but wondered if you could make any more suggestions from other manufacturers for me to consider?

My preferred mode of working is to have manual control as much as possible, so I am not concerned if they are not AF lenses. I am in the fortunate position of being able to put performance and build quality before price.

Richard Sharp

A If price really is no object, and you're happy with manual focus, then you could do a lot worse than consider some Zeiss lenses. The Makro-Planar T* 100mm f/2 is widely considered to be just about the best lens of its type, but it costs £1,449, compared to £630 for Nikon's 105mm f/2.8 Micro. Sigma's equivalent, the 105mm f/2.8 Macro, is just £379 and still a superb lens (we use it for all our camera testing). The Nikon and the Sigma both offer 1:1 magnification, autofocus and image stabilisation, while the Zeiss only gives 1:2 magnification and is manual focus only.

Sigma also makes a couple of longer focal length macro lenses which are also very highly regarded, including a 150mm f/2.8 for around £700 and a 180mm f/2.8 for about £1,200. For plant photography, these could help with selective focus effects and giving less-cluttered backgrounds.

For landscapes, Zeiss has a number of truly excellent wideangle primes, including the £1,270 Distagon T* 25mm f/2, and the £1,450 Distagon T* 21mm f/2.8. However, the £560 Samyang

24mm f/1.4 comes surprisingly close in image quality, for a fraction of the price. Like the Zeiss lenses it's manual focus and has an aperture control ring on the barrel.

As usual this ends up being a judgement call on how much extra you're prepared to spend to get an extra few per cent in terms of image quality. Paying more money should normally get you better results, but modern lens design is so advanced that even relatively inexpensive optics can be excellent.

Andy Westlake

Blurry patch

Q I have a Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L; it's the original one so it's relatively old. I upgraded to the Mark II after it was released and haven't used the original since. The other day, after reading a thread discussing the differences between the original and the Mark II, I decided to dig my old 24-70 out of the garage and compare the two for myself.

However, I was dismayed to discover that it seems to create a patch of blur around the centre of any images I take with it now. I have tried wiping the lens, as well as the rear element, but the circular area of blur is still showing up in the images, even though it looks clean. What do you think may be causing this?

Fatz Rolt

A This is a problem I've not come across before, but it sounds as though it may have collected some moisture while stored in your garage. It's very important to store unused equipment in cool, dry places that aren't prone to temperature shifts. First, I would try leaving it in a sealed bag with a drying agent – rice is a good place to start. Leave it in rice for 24-72 hours and then give it another try. If that doesn't work, contact your nearest Canon service centre and see if they can offer any further help.

John Devo



Files in the Adobe RGB colour space can display incorrectly with some websites or browsers, leading to dull, desaturated colours

Colour space woes?

Q I used to think I knew what to do with my camera colour space setting, but now I'm confused again. I read a long time ago that Adobe RGB gives a wider range of colours, so I've always set my cameras to that. But now a member of my camera club has argued that this isn't necessary, and is completely the wrong thing to do when I'm putting my photos on the internet.

Can one of your boffins help? I normally shoot my new X-T1 in JPEG and put my everyday pictures straight onto Flickr, but I also like processing my favourites from raw and making big prints.

Martin Eickmann

A This question isn't completely straightforward to answer, in fact given the workflow you've described it probably doesn't matter very much whether you use sRGB or Adobe RGB. But it's certainly true that if you're posting pictures to the internet, it's safest to use sRGB, as not all browsers or websites are able to display Adobe RGB files properly. This means that colours can sometimes end up looking flat and desaturated on-screen.

It's important to understand that the colour space setting only affects the camera's JPEG files, and makes no difference to the raws. Instead, you define the colour space of your output

images in your raw processor program, dependent upon your needs. So it's perfectly possible to shoot sRGB JPEGs for web, and process your favourite raw files shot at the same time using Adobe RGB.

The only real question remaining is whether your camera's JPEG output looks different in Adobe RGB compared to raw. In my experience there's normally little, if any, visible difference, but it's easy enough to find out for yourself by taking a few test shots in each. Alternatively you can convert the same raw file in-camera to both sRGB and Adobe RGB, and see if there's any obvious difference in colour.

Andy Westlake

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MY HOME-MADE CAMERA



Mike's ingenious pinhole camera

110° pinhole camera

Retired engineer Mike Rignall explains how he made this fully functional pinhole camera

EVEN illumination is always desirable in any panoramic view and with a flat film plane this is just not possible with a pinhole. After a few cups of coffee it became obvious that the only way to get even illumination was to bend the film in a semicircle. In this way the pinhole-to-film distance is constant and the problem should be solved. Since focal length does not apply to a pinhole design, the pinhole-to-film distance can be adjusted to make any negative size. I decided to use 2 frames of 12 on 120 size

giving me a negative length of 120mm. At first sight it would appear that any angular coverage is possible, in practice due to constructional restraints I settled for a 110° coverage. This infers a 'focal length' of about 58mm. All that is needed now is a circle of wood 116mm in diameter, cut in half and you have the heart of the camera. The shutter is self explanatory and could be simplified, but since I have a lathe I like the knurled knobs, but Maplins can supply a good alternative.

**Made by**

Mike Rignall is an 81-year-old retired engineer. He spent his working life in electronics but has always had a passion for cameras and optics. On retirement he set up a fully equipped workshop to indulge himself in his love of camera design and fabrication

The components

- One door security viewer
- About 1/8m² 6mm MDF
- A few offcuts of aluminium rod

Overview

My first job was to spend some time with a spreadsheet working out how to make a wideangle pinhole camera with almost even illumination over about 110°. Optical engineers have a few techniques to get even illumination. Alas this little luxury is not available to pinhole builders, leading to Plan B



A semi-circle of wood, 116mm in diameter, is the heart of the camera

Pinhole diameter is always a compromise. In theory, the smaller the pinhole, the sharper the image. Alas, diffraction upsets this principle and so I have used a 300 micron (0.3mm) hole as a good compromise. This gives a working aperture of about f/190.



Thanks to Jean Luc Werpin, a Belgian photographer, who took this image with the homemade camera

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BLAST FROM THE PAST

Olympus OM1

Ivor Matanle recalls the revolutionary small, lightweight Olympus SLR that spawned the OM range and a whole generation of small SLRs from the major manufacturers

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Professor Newman on...

Carbon trading

Bob Newman has an in-depth look at Nikon's innovation in camera construction

One of the prestige features of top-end cameras is 'magnesium construction'. What this means varies from manufacturer to manufacturer. Mirrorless cameras tend to be constructed around a rectangular metal tube, in much the same way as Oskar Barnack's original Leica, where the body was made with a flattened piece of telescope tubing. SLRs are somewhat different, being built around the mirror box, which maintains the all-important alignment between lens and sensor. Apart from three top-end cameras (the Canon 1D X, the Nikon D4s



Most DSLRs are built around a plastic mirror box, to which the lens mount and other components are attached

and D810), all available mainstream DSLRs have a plastic mirror box. The more expensive magnesium body cameras have non-structural magnesium alloy skin panels applied over this plastic chassis, shown in the publicity shots used to promote the 'all-metal' credentials. This has left Nikon with a publicity problem, since their cameras all use a plastic front panel, up to and including the top-end professional models. For those, a picture of the metal chassis serves to confirm its metal body credentials. For the lower end enthusiast models, Nikon has to carefully manage the publicity shots.



Nikon's latest DSLR, the D750, employs magnesium alloy top and rear panels, and a front plate made from carbon-fibre reinforced plastic

'The material comes as plastic pellets already loaded with carbon fibres that can be fed straight into an injection-moulding machine'

With the advent of the D750, Nikon's marketing people have been able to replace the metal-body mantra with a new one, 'the carbon-fibre reinforced monocoque construction'. This does, in truth, refer to a genuine innovation in camera construction that Nikon first introduced with the D5300. It has been made possible by a new material introduced by the Japanese chemical company Teijin. This material is a Carbon Fibre Reinforced Thermoplastic (CFRTP) called 'Sereebo'.

The main innovation is that the material comes as plastic pellets already loaded with carbon fibres that can be fed straight into an injection-moulding machine to make moulded parts of superior

strength and rigidity. Nikon could have simply substituted the existing polymers with Sereebo but instead have decided to use the characteristics of the material to produce a new construction principle, called monocoque, using an analogy for cars built with structural skins rather than a chassis.

In a conventional DSLR the internal components are attached to the mirror box using metal brackets and plates, the combined assembly forming a chassis from which the skin can be detached. In Nikon's new design the 'chassis' is the Sereebo front panel, to which is attached the mirror box and other components, resulting in a weight saving and, in all probability, a cost saving.

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer



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Index to advertisers

Alpha Optical Dist	86
Avenso	13
Camera Jungle	83
Cameraworld	74-75
Campkins Camera Centre Ltd	85
Camtech	65, 86
Cash4cameras	85
Clifton Cameras	18
Collectable Cameras	85
Dale Photographic Ltd	70
Digital Depot	49

EISA	9	Park Cameras Ltd	Cover: iii, 71-73
Ffordes Photographic Ltd	78-79	Peak Imaging (ProPix)	54
Frank Wilkinson Cameras	69	Premier Ink & Photographic	76-77
Grays of Westminster	32-33, 54	Samsung Electronics UK Ltd	Cover: iv
Intro 2020 Ltd	58	Sigma Imaging	40
LCE Group	60, 62, 84, 86	SRS Ltd	64
Manfrotto Dist Ltd	Cover ii, 27	The Imaging Warehouse	54
Mifsud Photographic	80-81	UK Photodistro Ltd	84
Nicholas Camera Company	82	Wex Photographic	31, 66-68

Classified 87-89



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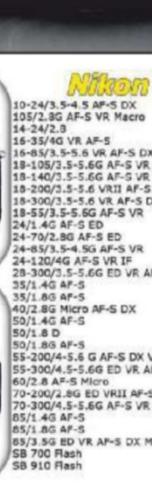
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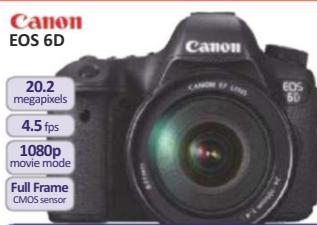
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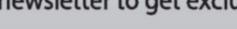
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At Premier Ink Supplies, we stock two types of cartridges for Epson printers - **Originals**, which are made by Epson, and **Compatibles**, which are made by a UK company called Jet Tec. Using Jet Tec Compatibles is a way of saving money, without compromising on the quality of your prints. Here're the results from two independent ink tests that agree...



Ink Test
Winner



"Jet Tec's colours were superb, with single greys and blacks very close to Epson ...so Jet Tec wins!"

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CX3600/3650, CX4000, CX6000

Parosol Inks

R200, R220, R300, R320, R340

RX500, RX600, RX620, RX840

Seahorse Inks

Photo R800, R1800

Frog Inks

Photo R240, R245,

RX420, RX425, RX520, RX525

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Photo R2400

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Photo 4100

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Photo R2800

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SX400/405/415/515, D78/92/120, B40W, BX300

DX400/440/450/500/600/700/7400/8400/9400

D68, D88,

DX3800/3850, DX4200/4250, DX4800/4850

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S20, S21, SX100/105/110/115/200/205/210/215

SX400/405/415/515, D78/92/120, B40W, BX300

D50, D51, D52, D53, D54, D55, D56, D57, D58, D59, D60, D61, D62, D63, D64, D65, D66, D67, D68, D69, D70, D71, D72, D73, D74, D75, D76, D77, D78, D79, D80, D81, D82, D83, D84, D85, D86, D87, D88, D89, D90, D91, D92, D93, D94, D95, D96, D97, D98, D99, D100, D101, D102, D103, D104, D105, D106, D107, D108, D109, D110, D111, D112, D113, D114, D115, D116, D117, D118, D119, D120, D121, D122, D123, D124, D125, D126, D127, D128, D129, D130, D131, D132, D133, D134, D135, D136, D137, D138, D139, D140, D141, D142, D143, D144, D145, D146, D147, D148, D149, D150, D151, D152, D153, D154, D155, D156, D157, D158, D159, D160, D161, D162, D163, D164, D165, D166, D167, D168, D169, D170, D171, D172, D173, D174, D175, D176, D177, D178, D179, D180, D181, D182, D183, D184, D185, D186, D187, D188, D189, D190, D191, D192, D193, D194, D195, D196, D197, D198, D199, D200, D201, D202, D203, D204, D205, D206, D207, D208, D209, D210, D211, D212, D213, D214, D215, D216, D217, D218, D219, D220, D221, D222, D223, D224, 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Polaroid Back	£25	100-400 F4.5/5.6 L E899/449	GA645 M-	WMA1 TR M- X6 USED		50 F1.4 AF box	£199	100-300 F5.6 AIS	£149	16-67 F4.5/5.6	£369	16-68 F4.5/5.6
WLF	£69	200 F2.8 LUI	£479	WMA1 TR M- X6 USED		50 F1.4 AF box	£199	100-300 F5.6 AIS	£149	16-69 F4.5/5.6	£369	16-70 F4.5/5.6
Rotary prism	£129	300 F2.8 L IS LIU M-	£2499	WMA1 TR M- X6 USED		50 F1.4 AF box	£199	100-300 F5.6 AIS	£149	16-71 F4.5/5.6	£369	16-72 F4.5/5.6
AEI III prism	£179	300 F2.8 L IS U M-	£2499	WMA1 TR M- X6 USED		50 F1.4 AF box	£199	100-300 F5.6 AIS	£149	16-73 F4.5/5.6	£369	16-74 F4.5/5.6
AEI II prism	£79	500 F4 U L M- box	£499	WMA1 TR M- X6 USED		50 F1.4 AF box	£199	100-300 F5.6 AIS	£149	16-75 F4.5/5.6	£369	16-76 F4.5/5.6
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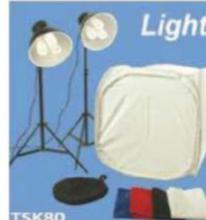
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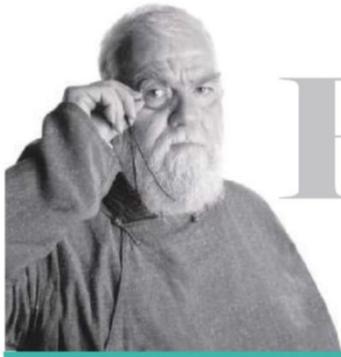
**Amateur
Photographer**

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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers...

Goering & Dr Stahmer (1946) by Ralph Morse

Picture research is a strange business. Rosie Barratt at AP, who secures the rights to the pictures you see in this column, is extremely good at it. But this is not the picture I originally asked for, which was by Khaldei Yevgeni. Instead, it's a near-identical shot by Ralph Morse. She found both. I think this is the better picture.

The picture elements are necessarily very similar because there is effectively only one place the photographer can stand. Goering, on one side of the screen, is talking to his lawyer, Dr Stahmer, on the other. A 'snowdrop' (US military policeman) sits beside the accused. But Morse appears to have used available light, while as far as I can see Yevgeni used flash.

The result is that in the Yevgeni picture, the lawyer's head is overexposed from being that much closer to the flash, and the snowdrop's helmet is far less prominent. Goering is similarly exposed in both shots, although, if anything, the expression on his toad-like face is probably more telling in the Yevgeni shot.

Both are extremely compelling pictures, the more so as we know Goering's identity. Both would be great pictures of any common criminal. Given that it is the Reichsmarschall, they are even more dramatic; more heart-stopping.

Or are they? Do we bring too much to this picture, imbuing it with more meaning than it has in purely pictorial terms? My suggestion is that we do not: that it is, purely pictorially, a superb picture.

Where do you stand?

Then again, if two photographers could take two excellent, but very similar, pictures, how far could they take the credit if they had only one place to stand? And, further still, how far is it legitimate for me, nearly 70 years on, to apply either aesthetic or intellectual criteria to a photograph of a leading Nazi?

As ever, the questions burrow deeper and deeper. Again, I'd suggest a perhaps contrarian view: that it is possible to take a pedestrian picture of a monster. If the photographer(s) can make a more dramatic picture, it brings home all the more clearly what we are looking at, what we are seeing.



'I'd suggest a perhaps contrarian view: that it is indeed possible to take a pedestrian picture of a monster'

This leads to perhaps the deepest questions of all. Hermann Wilhelm Goering, 1893-1946, was a war hero, a great fighter pilot in the First World War. How far was he flattered and bribed into complicity with the Nazis, most spectacularly with his

great country estate of Carinhall? Was he completely out of his depth?

And regardless of the undisputed culpability of countless Nazis, what are war crimes exactly? If you win, few dare ask the question.

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